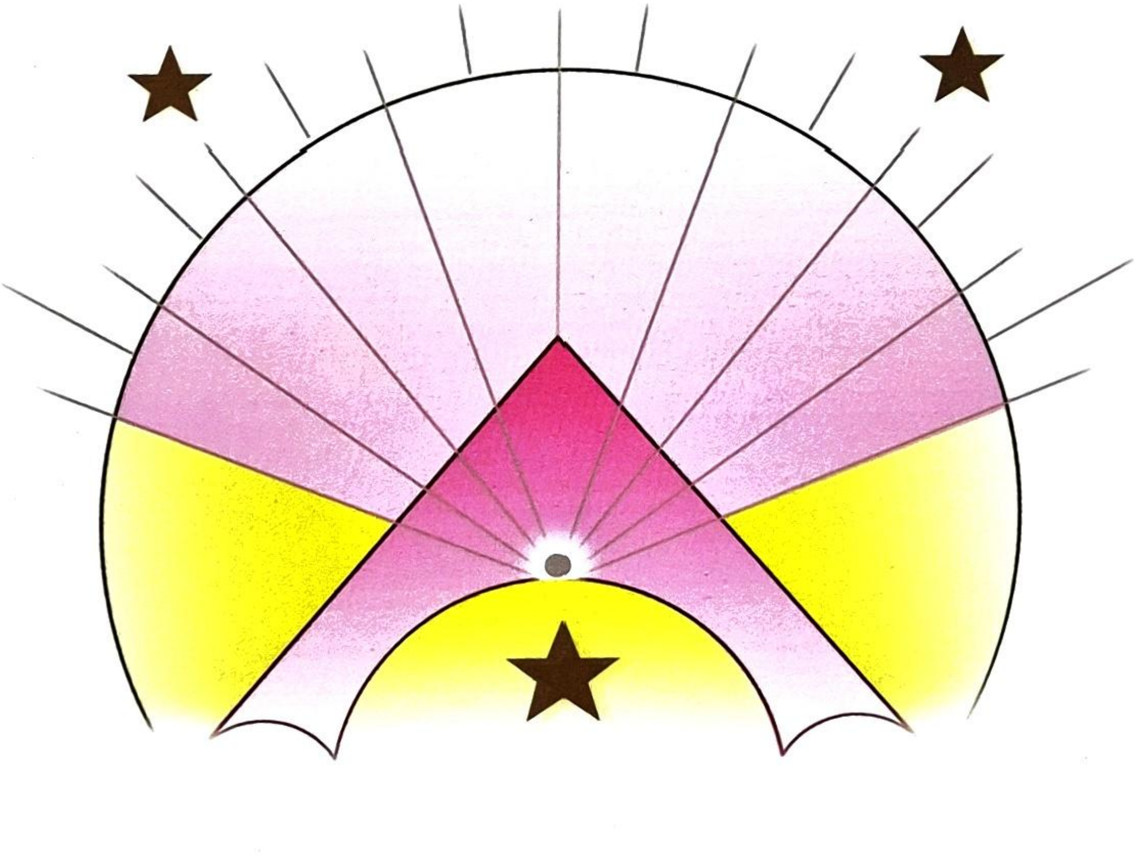
THE PRINCIPLES OF SAHAJ MARG

VOLUME 16

The Gift of Love



Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari

The Gift of Love, which is the sixteenth volume of The Principles of Sahaj Marg series, contains talks given by Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari during a tour of India in 1992. Speeches given at major spiritual celebrations and international seminars and gatherings are included. These talks challenge some of our deepest preconceptions and awaken us to the divine possibility of realising our true Selves through the practice of meditation.

Love is not like a candle before a small puff of wind which puts it out, but it is like a forest fire which, with every breath of wind, increases. The flame must never be put out.

—Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari

The Principles of Sahaj Marg

Volume 16

The Gift of Love

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Talks given in India in 1992

Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari

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Foreword

We are pleased to present this volume of talks given by our spiritual Master, Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari (Chariji), as he toured India in 1992. Delivered on different occasions to diverse audiences – including college students and faculty, aspirants visiting from overseas, and international assemblies – the talks challenge us to rethink all of our preconceptions about life, values and goals. Chariji addresses numerous topics, such as the illusion of power and success in today's civilisation; meditation as a duty to oneself; the spiritual journey beyond peace to a balanced existence; and the true nature of the living Master. He speaks of the divine promise of Sahaj Marg and the importance of faithfully bringing the system, pure and unalloyed, into the future, and he sternly admonishes us to stop discussing meditation and just meditate, as it is in the heart alone that Reality abides.

In each talk, we hear the voice of a Master of calibre seeking to awaken us to the divine possibility of realising our true Selves. Quoting his own Master, Babuji Maharaj, Chariji provides the ultimate assurance: "You are really that which you have to become."

The Publishers, 2014

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1

The True Power of Love

I have been corrupted by my friend, or shall I say, corrupted by psychology. So nowadays, I am beginning to psychologise a little and my English is also suffering the consequences! I have one observation to make. All of you would have noticed that everybody who was called to speak came and spoke, and they were all Westerners. I want Indian brothers and sisters to note this, that obedience also gives us the power to perform.

Obedience gives strength. This is of course a great story in the Ramayana. When Hanuman was told to jump across the ocean to Lanka, he said, "I cannot do it." But then he said, "Think of Him and do it", and he was able to do it. So this is a new aspect of the psychology of obedience, the power that it confers upon us to do things which normally we would not be able to do. It is not

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25 April 1992, Bangalore, India

wrong at all to think that you cannot speak. But it is also right to think that when you are told to speak, you can speak. If you are told to die, you can die. If you are told to live, you can live. So it must be in obedience to an order emanating from the ultimate authority. Therefore obedience is power. This is a lesson that the Westerners must learn because they don't know this.

So I come back to teach the Westerners what their obedience can give them, because now they are obeying blindly – they don't know why they obey. It is a cultural thing, shall we say, that somebody says, "Do it", we do it. It is polite. It is courteous. But you must understand that when you obey, the power of Him who gives the order or the request or the instruction is behind that; no more your power. So, please learn to obey without consideration, without thinking – no cultural impact, no civilisation behind it, no idea of even discipline. I obey because through obedience, I get more and more power – the power of the Master. So this is a very valuable lesson that has been demonstrated today to both those who would not have obeyed and to those who have obeyed. That is lesson number one.

Number two [is] this idea of fear of death. [Our sister] spoke about it so much. I used to read a lot of stories regarding the sea – life on the sea, ocean-going mariners, in the days of the sail and rudder. It was only when there was fear that everything was withdrawn – the hatches were battened down, the sails were furled up and put away. Because your small power of the sail, which was all right when you had a small puff of wind to gently push you over the ocean, it could not withstand the bigger force of a storm for instance. That same sail, which was useful to catch a puff of wind and go gently like a swan on the seas, was disastrous in the face of a big wind. So the sail has to be closed. Only sticks (the masts) were left. If it was possible, they would have brought them down too.

So in the face of the ultimate power, if you put your power, it is destruction. Now, what is the power that is going to destroy us? What are our sails with which we are cruising on the ocean of life? To put it in another way, our desires. Fear of death only implies a desire to live. It is not so much a fear of death as the desire to live longer and longer. It is the fright that that desire may be terminated, that that life may be terminated. Therefore my desire may be frustrated. That comes to our mind as a fear of death. How can we be afraid of something we do not know? Who has died to say, "I am afraid of death"? It is illogical to be afraid of something I have never met. I cannot be afraid of an enemy I have not seen. I cannot be afraid of a tiger I have never seen, or of a snake. Those are irrational fears, as a psychologist would tell you – they have no rationality. So, most of our fears have no rationality; they are irrational.

So our education has not been of any use, whether in the West or in the East, of making us rational creatures. However we might pride ourselves on our rationality, we are all irrational. And what it is that points to that irrationality with the finger which cannot be turned away from you is fear. As long as fear exists, you are irrational. Because always fear is the fear of the unknown. Nobody is afraid of that which is known. You may be weighing your chances of success or failure. But that is not fear. That is calculating your chances. But when there is the unknown element, then you are afraid. And unknown is unknown by definition, and to be afraid of the unknown is irrational. So we are all irrational. The educated are irrational, stupid are irrational, rich are irrational, poor are irrational – everybody is irrational. So as long as you are afraid, please know that you are irrational, and when you try to put up your small sails, which are your egos and your desires, to run away before the storm, you are inviting disaster. Because against that mighty breath of wind, your puny sails cannot withstand. So surrender means, unfurl your sails. Why? Because then His force may now act upon me. Somehow my ship will be saved. I have surrendered.

The third is this idea of power (somebody talked about power). What is it that we really do? I have been talking of sailors with the old sail boats. Okay, what were they doing? All the power they expended, the energy they used was to put up a certain square footage of canvas and then the wind did the rest. But they were proud, especially if you go to the British in those olden days, they were the masters of the oceans. "Britannia rule the waves" – we used to sing a song in school – "Rule, Britannia; Britannia rule the waves." Nobody rules the waves. King Canute of that same origin, the British, was fool enough to stand on the beach, and the sycophants and flatterers said, "Majesty, command the waves to stop." And this British majesty (Britannic, as they say) said, "Stop!" – and the waves laughed at him. They care not for temporal power, however mighty.

So, to put up a square of sail which you call a lateen, or this or that, and to pretend that you are running the oceans is stupid, is irrational. Today, what do you do? You harness the power of the atom. You push a switch and say, "I am running", let us say, "an atomic submarine."

The Germans are very proud of their atomic submarines. They can go six thousand nautical miles without surfacing – wonderful! So does a whale, and a whale is not proud.

So you are only harnessing power resources available to you such as the sun for solar power, the tides for tidal power, the wind for the power of the wind, the atoms, the matter of this earth, for atomic power. You are putting those powers to work and you say, "I am doing it! My civilisation is mighty." So, in this lies arrogance. And when that power fails, that civilisation fails, because they don't know what to do themselves. Take away the car – the American is dead, because he cannot even buy an ice cream without driving twenty miles for it. America is really a situation, a country, a civilisation where without a car, you don't exist. People think here that they own car for pleasure and pride – not at all. It is a necessity. The doctor cannot go to work without one, the sweeper-woman cannot come to clean up your house without her car, you cannot go even to buy a postage stamp. Cut the telephone lines of the Americans and take away their car, you have a dead civilisation, instantly.

So, how dependent you have become on these grandiose illusions of power, of civilisation, of human abilities, when you have been progressively reducing human ability to doing nothing more than pushing switches – this is something you must all think very carefully about. Don't go back home with the theory or the impression that I am criticising the West. I am not criticising the West. I have always said [that] a country like India would live not much differently after the worst atomic holocaust you can think of, because we have always been walking, using the trees as toilets, sleeping on gravel and sand. For us no holocaust will reduce us any further than where we are now. We would survive; you would not. Therefore the ability to survive means depending on yourself. "I can sleep anywhere" – that man will be happy anywhere. "I can eat or drink anything without falling sick" – that man will be happy under any circumstance. If I have to buy bottles of Bisleri [mineral water], the moment that Bisleri is not there, I have to run to the toilet.

Civilisation has progressively denuded human beings of their powers of survival and existence based on their own capacity to exist. This is a second point which you would all like to perhaps think over before we laugh at societies like the African, the Middle East, India, so-called developing countries, where we may not have chocolates but we can certainly eat mud, if necessary, and survive. So, one who will be afraid of death must not have these luxuries. One of the ways of overcoming this fear of death, fear of existence, is to be simple and down to earth and in tune with nature, as Babuji Maharaj said.

Why should we be simple and in tune with nature? Because, if you can walk ten kilometres without panting, you will be able to run at least five kilometres. But if all that you can do is get into the car, close the door and gasp a few minutes before you can press the starter button, you are lost. I must be able to survive under all circumstances. “He who is happy under all circumstances is the really happy person,” Babuji Maharaj said. What are these ‘all circumstances’? “No, no, Chari, it is correct, Babuji Maharaj said wonderful things. But you know I need my sausage,” says the German; “I need my hamburger,” says the American; “I need my pizza,” says the Italian, whereas the hungry people of this world only say, “I want my food. I am hungry – feed me. I am naked – clothe me. I am ignorant – teach me.”

So the time has come for the West to look to the East for really vital education on survival tactics, on development tactics, on surrender. How to unharness myself from all powers unnatural to my existence, artificially created, and to depend on those natural resources which are free, available to all, not polluting? How to forget that a standard of living is not a standard of living when it makes you a slave to that standard of living? And how to remember that when I have no standard of living, I am rich, I am happy, I am comfortable under all circumstances? I must include Madagascar also. There people are happy, though very poor.

I travel a lot. I have often found the people of these poor countries are always smiling. You don't see so many smiles in developed countries. Artificial smiles, yes – "Hello!" {mimicking a fake smile} That's only a movement of the lips. They can use their facial muscles with extraordinary capacity. A real smile from the heart I don't see or, I should say, I see very rarely. So we have to put back nature into its place, which means we must throw away artificiality and let nature come back into where it belongs.

So these are the lessons that an arrogant, developed nation and its people must learn, that not every black man has a black heart, that not every university degree confers wisdom, that not a high standard of living gives you happiness and pleasure and success. On the contrary, the rich man has to learn much from the poor man; the advanced civilisation has to learn very much from one which is still advancing. We have read of so many advanced nations. Each in its time was the most advanced – the Greek, the Roman, the Babylonian, the Egyptian. They were very proud nations. They called themselves conquerors of the world. "Hail Caesar!" and the whole world shook. Not "Hail Hitler!" "Hail Caesar!" came first, Hitler came much later. The whole world literally shook when Caesar stood up. What happened to the Caesars? Where are they today? I only see Italians who don't know what to do with themselves – a nation which has no government, which has had fifty-six governments in one-tenth of those numbers of years. Where are those Romans? Where are those Carthaginians? Where are those Babylonians? "O Babylon!" – you hear their proud cry. Where are they?

So if you have to learn a lesson from that of the advanced nations, it is: don't advance materially. Stay put where you are, at a comfortable average. Let the fools take advancement; you remain where you are. Have your comfortable place to sleep in, decent food to eat and something to cover your nakedness – happy. Aspire for more and you are going the way of all these ancient civilisations. However great they have been, today there is only mud and ashes where they were. There is no one to speak there too. You see the modern

Egyptian, you see the modern Greek, you see the modern Roman – what are they? Parodies of what they were supposed to have been once – weak imitations, living in the past.

Live in the present, be in the present. "Ye have eyes, but ye see not" – why not? Our eyes are open, why don't we see? Because we have been conditioned to see what we think is worth looking at and not seeing everything our civilisation tells us is no good. So why don't our eyes see? Because we are trained to see partially, trained to see what we want to see, trained to see what our society thinks we should see – see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil. The first rule – stop the perception, because one who cannot see evil cannot see good. They are two sides of the same coin. One who will not see dirt will not see the beauty either; one who will not look at the black will never see the white – because there is no absolute white, there is no absolute black. There is a gradation, and perception must tell you what it is. So having our eyes open when we cannot see – "Ye have eyes but ye see not, ye have ears but ye hear not", and so on.

Now, what are we supposed to do? As Babuji Maharaj said, we have to unlearn everything that we have learnt. Get established in a new set of existential values, become human. All that goes around in a thousand dollar suit is not human. It resembles a human being in form and in shape and in size. Everyone who sits in a car is not civilised – we know that. Everyone who rides a plane is certainly not educated. So, we have to unlearn everything. Come down to the fundamental levels of a human existence. Learn to perceive, look and see what there is to be seen. Don't see what you want to see. Open your ears. Hear what is to be heard and not what you want to hear. The problem with advice is that you are advising all the time, nobody worries about it; nobody acts by it precisely because they hear what they want to hear, not what you are saying.

Babuji Maharaj was always sad about this. "Babuji Maharaj, when should I get up?" "In the morning for puja, it is written in the Ten Maxims." "Thank you." And next morning, he comes one hour late. "Books are to be read. Not today, not tomorrow. It can be read at any time convenient to myself – in the future perhaps, most profitably in the future, because I don't have to bother in the present." "Is it necessary to be punctual?" "Well, I am telling you, you should be there when the meditation begins." "Thank you, Babuji." It doesn't mean you should not be punctual. And when I asked Babuji, "Why don't you tell them an exact answer or an exact reply?" He said, "I don't want to put upon them two sins, the second one being the disobedience to the Master. If I say, "Yes, you must be punctual", and he is not, he is disobedient." Obedience gives power; disobedience gives punishment – two ends of the stick. Now which would you have? So when we want to know, when we want to rise, there are some cardinal principles which we have to adopt as, shall we say, existential supports without which I cannot live.

The modern human being is no more alive than a bit of rock in the statues of the modern museums. They are alive only to the extent of being able to move in the way their samskaras push them here and there. They are not alive, their bodies are alive. So to be alive, you have to wake up out of this sloth, this sleep into which you have fallen, this illusion of success and development and civilisation into which you have slipped. Get up out of it, throw away these false values created by human beings that they are civilised, that they are creative. Some fool comes and scribbles a few black lines on the wall, and it is called art and he is a creative genius. People strum a few guitars here and there and caterwaul (as we say in the good old English language – caterwauling), and that becomes a music ensemble. Where have our values gone? Where have our systems of values gone? Because we are now rudderless ships – we don't know where we are going. So, like the monkeys of Rudyard Kipling, we have to say, "We know we are good, therefore we are good." Nobody else has to say it.

So, civilisations have to wake up – like when we get up out of bed, we throw off the bedclothes, throw off our robes, go and have a shower, put on neat clothes and walk out. Civilisations have to wake up only to throw off those covers of civilisation, those illusions of civilisation, come up afresh, dip yourself into the ocean of bliss which is inside yourself in meditation, and come out and say, "Here I am as I was, as I shall be." So meditation is really a bath in the immortal tank, pond, whatever you want to call it. We call it the *amrita* [nectar that when partaken bestows immortality] – the eternal, the deathless. It is in you. You take a dip into that every morning, renew yourself, come out fresh – no more slothful, no more indignant, no more frustrated. Live a human life in all its plenitude, full of happiness, joy, charity, love, and go to sleep with a prayer on your lips that, "The day is done, thanks to You. Please bear with me and let me, tomorrow morning, immerse myself again in That."

You have some of these myths in Europe – that fellow who was dipped [in the river Styx], Achilles. But his mother held his heel, so it became vulnerable. So what is the story? Dip yourself totally. Don't put only your feet or your fingers into it and say, "Wonderful! This nectar is beautiful." Europeans really eat a hearty meal. They are cooking, putting their fingers into it, sucking it and wiping it on a piece of tissue, and going and serving everybody else. This they do with the nectar of immortality lying in their hearts too. "It is wonderful, Chari! *You* meditate," they tell me. Someone even went to the extent of saying, "Please, for heaven's sake, you meditate – because if you don't, where are we?" Very compassionate of them! So, power – not outside yourself. If you face power outside yourself, you can meet it only at its lowest ebb. Puff of wind and a sail, okay.

What is the true power? As somebody was saying about love yesterday, love is not like a candle before a small puff of wind which puts it out, but it is like a forest fire which, with every breath of wind, increases. The flame must never be put out. Whooh! [blowing sound] – and [it] is gone. It is a candle. A little trouble in the family and there is a divorce. No patience to look over the peak of the hill to see what is on the other side. There used to be a scout song when I was in school: "The bear went over the mountain to see what he could see." And then the end was: "What do you think he saw? Well, the other side of the mountain." Well, today we have no patience to see the other side of the mountain.

People are married for three months and they are divorced. Why? Because there was no compatibility. Screws and bolts and nuts compatibility – that is what we seek today. The true inner compatibility, the compatibility of the heart – nobody waits for. Physical compatibility first, you see. It is a shameful thing often when I hear complaints from couples in Europe. The first reference is always, "Our sexual life isn't going too well." I mean, in India, people would be kicked in their backsides if they spoke of such things in public. Nobody would dare to, first of all.

So we have to revise our ideas of life, of death, of power, of obedience, of surrender and perhaps, if you are able to do all this successfully, in faith in ourselves. One of the reasons for the downfall of civilisations, of great religions, is because of the faith in the spoken word or the written word and not in the speaker. They have faith in the Bible. And the Bible is a thing of paper and ink and leather.

If Christ were living today, how many would have the guts to walk up to him and say, "I am one of your disciples"? How many would dare to do it today? Or will they start stoning him all over again? Chase him out, put a crown of thorns on his head and crucify him all over again. Perhaps that is why they don't come again and again, because their destiny is a fixed destiny, given our fixation with our destiny.

So, please think over all this carefully. Remember to see like children, who see with a clear perception because they have not yet conditioned themselves to see what they *must* see, but to see everything there is. Therefore children *see*. We look, but we don't see. Children hear. For them there is no such thing as pleasant noise and unpleasant noise. All is joy for them. Give the child a new rattle and they will rattle away for days. He is happy in that noise, because for him it is a clear perception of sound, not noise. So they see clearly, they hear clearly.... [break in audio] Everything about them is clean until the parents and society and civilisation step in and say, "This you shall see, this you shall not see. This doesn't exist." And when you are taught as a child that this doesn't exist, that doesn't exist, when you have to face it in your later life, what will you be but a neurotic, in the least?

So let us at least be charitable towards our children; let us love them in the true sense; let us permit them to see, to hear, to smell in an absolutely natural fashion. Let us not impose our corrupt civilisation on them and corrupt them with these things. Let at least the next generation go free.

Thank you.

2

Preserve the Purity of the Mission

Brothers and Sisters,

I am happy to see so many of you from the US here. I wish all of the American abhyasis could have been here, but given the costs of time and money, it's not realistic to expect everybody. But I would hope that, in the future, prefects should be here as often as possible because my visits to the West will inevitably get less and less frequent, more and more infrequent.

I have been impressed with the material functioning of the US Mission during the year 1992. If this was a company board meeting, I would just say, "Hurray!" and terminate the meeting because there is nothing more to speak

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29 April 1992, Bangalore, India

after that. Just as a matter of information to all of you, I had requested some figures and starting, I think, with a figure of little less than nine thousand dollars total assets of the Mission in 1983, it is almost a million dollars at the close of 1992. (1991, is it? Okay, 1991 – we are still in 1992. I am always wishing to be ahead.) That is very impressive indeed. And the ashram is coming up beautifully, thanks to the cooperation of all of you. I hope you will all use it, not just build it.

You know, one trouble, one problem with the Indians, we build {structures} very well but we never maintain them. You can see all our buildings – they are beautifully built but dilapidated structures, not maintained properly. It is as if we just build and leave it to others to maintain. I hope the Americans will build, maintain, and use and profit by the ashrams there. I have had the occasion to speak about the importance of life in an ashram before, so I won't repeat it now.

I have had letters about division of functions. And while I would certainly appreciate every one of you participating in the building of the Mission in the US, it would be rather juvenile to think that the Mission is built. In my mind, even the foundation hasn't been completed yet.

We are in the process of laying the foundation for the Mission in the US. So, as I said, it would be very juvenile to think we have built already. We have only built one ashram, we have fewer than six hundred abhyasis, and looking at it from the perspective of time elapsed from 1972 to 1992 – over a period of twenty years – to achieve a growth of abhyasis from around twenty-two to six hundred can hardly be called growth.

I mean, it would be improper to use the word 'growth' in relation to such statistics. I would say this is more like a raindrop falling. Inevitably it becomes a little bigger as it passes through the atmosphere, and it is more due to the chance phenomena of physics rather than to any planned effort or attraction through love etc. This Mission must and can only grow through love. It will not grow through management techniques, however highfalutin they may be; it will not grow through money, however necessary money may be and is, as we know. Because I find, more and more, a phenomenon which has been rather troubling me since the last two, three years, that we are approaching the growth of the Mission from a business-like angle, a corporate sort of attitude, rather than from a human welfare aspect.

Sahaj Marg is essentially a human welfare project – human welfare project in the sense that this project aims at transcending humanity itself and going into the higher realms of existence. I wouldn't like to label them. See, we don't call them angelic and this, that and the other, but transcending the human existentialistic pattern and becoming what Babuji used to call 'the perfect human being' or the 'divinised human being'.

It is very important to emphasise this to the abhyasis because I find abhyasis suffer from certain fundamental lacks in understanding. They think Sahaj Marg is some sort of a panacea for evils – it can set right a cancerous patient, bring back the dead, things like that. We are not here to cure people or heal people, though both these are possible during sadhana. They are not expected results, though such results can be expected out of sincere practice, if the Master wills.

We know that Sahaj Marg is not for bodily welfare, material welfare, but very often, most often, from all over the world I get letters – and I get on an average sixty letters a day – they are all full of requests for help in dealing with material situations. Marital situations are the maximum in number, health situations come next. Fortunately we don't get many of the near bankrupt abhyasis crying for money. Very few letters, I would wonder if I could even say one in ten thousand, speaks of spirituality.

So we have to realign our sights, as it were, and prefects especially have to be prepared to do some introspection and rethink on how they have been approaching the American public, the American situation, the American way of life, and see how we can penetrate deeper into the American society. I find that the Mission growth is also due to a large influx of Indians living in America. I would like to see some Americans coming in. I am not racist, but when in America, we expect Americans to be there. You know, this is a problem with the Mission in South Africa for instance, where barring two white gentlemen, all the rest are Indians. It is the same in Malaysia: barring one or two Malays, all the rest are Indians. Now if you have to only get Indians into the Mission, I could very well stick to India itself and enlarge the Mission here.

So, our purpose is not to carry coal to Newcastle, but to make all people of the world benefit from this. I don't know if it is the fault of the approach, because one tends to tackle the easiest jobs first. I have always said that during my career as a company executive, I did the most difficult things first, because then I was progressively releasing myself right from the first minute of my day, working day. But the general tendency is to deal with the easiest ones first and leave the difficult ones for later, and they get more and more difficult just because they have been delayed.

I wonder whether we are doing something like that, because it is easier to deal with the Indians when we are dealing with a system which has originated in India. (I am careful not to say an 'Indian System'.) A system which has originated in India; it is certainly not an Indian system, because it is a system of yoga which is applicable to all human beings.

So prefects, especially, have to rethink on this. When we talk of division of power and, you know, east coast management, west coast management, etc., it is all more of a division of power and authority. To me, of course, it is necessary that the Mission runs on well-oiled wheels. But then we are tackling the whole thing from a different viewpoint, from a different aspect, from the aspect of management again. I have been even surprised by this sudden move to Greenfield, Massachusetts. What is wonderful about Greenfield, Massachusetts? To me all fields are green, and if they are not green, by Jove, you make it green; you plant a few crops and they become green. See, prefects should understand that they should go where there is work and not huddle together like cattle. That speaks of some sort of a... what do they call it? An herbivore's

attitude to life. I would like prefects to disperse, because many of the problems arise because there are too many prefects in one place.

Babuji Maharaj said – and I am speaking with the authority of his statement – that he made a mistake when he had more than one prefect in each place because the moment there were two, there were power problems, ego problems, groupism developing there. I face the problem in India, where people who were far advanced when I joined the Mission think that they should remain far advanced even today. I mean, nobody denies them that possibility, because here 'Be deserving' is the motto of the Mission. Those who deserve, get. It is no use saying, "Oh, I was…." India was great too, once upon a time. Babuji Maharaj said, "India will be great", but I would like to see a day when India *is* great. What is the use of saying, "I was great, I shall be great"? Today, I am nothing. "My grandfather was a great man, my grandson is going to be the President of India" – what am I going to be in-between?

So I would like prefects who have this itch to keep moving, what we call loose-footed, to think of moving to areas where they can work with the Mission, because in America you can earn your living anywhere. It's not as if only Greenfield, Massachusetts, has jobs to offer or good housing. Any village in America is good enough. You get all modern amenities, you have the best highways going through them, you have telephonic communication, you have satellite communication. I mean, what you can do in a bigger city, you can do much better from a village today.

So please avoid this tendency to groupism because I sense something like that developing in this, and I would not like a polarisation of forces or attitudes or loyalties to come into the Mission. I hope we can regulate the thinking of our abhyasis and mould them into directions in which they will benefit and the Mission will benefit too.

So this is a problem that I would like to nip in the bud, if it is possible. We must put up well-thought-out schemes for the business side of the Mission. Yes, money needs to be managed properly. Money management, time management, human resources management – these are fundamental to corporate structures. In a sense, Sahaj Marg, Shri Ram Chandra Mission is a corporate structure, because we are a structure which is registered, which deals in money, which deals in real estate, and therefore which is bound to work according to the laws of the land, fiscal and others. But this should not be carried to too much of an extreme in decentralisation, creation of divisions, etc. This is a request to all of you to avoid such approaches because like the human body, [the Mission] exists so that the soul may go through existence from, shall we say, hell to the Ultimate.

It is interesting to note that without a material existence, a spiritual existence is impossible – at least this is the foundation for the thinking on yogic subjects in India. That is why the Gita goes very boldly to say that even Brahma and Vishnu and Shiva must come down here again, be embodied as human beings and then liberate themselves, because they are not liberated souls. They are worshipped as gods, but they are gods because of perhaps enormous penance, good deeds, etc., but none which could have liberated them. It is a funny thing that presumably thousands of saints, millions of saints perhaps have been liberated, and here are these three powers, cosmic powers, stuck there for what should look to us like infinity of time and they have to come back here to again earn their liberation.

This must teach us the most important lesson: to avoid the craze for position, prestige, power – three P's. It is the bane of all life. The moment somebody has money, you say they become uppish; the moment they have some power, they think they can do anything; prestige, the same thing. But any civilisation which went on along this track, whether it is the Roman, the Carthaginian, the Egyptian, the Babylonian, they all met their disaster at the peak of their arrogance. Arrogance – you know, they say, "Pride goeth before a fall." Yes, of course!

So, we don't want a proud Mission. We want a service-oriented Mission, humble, not very conspicuous, working in a way which is not very visible, yet effective, like fish or squid swimming just subsurface in an ocean. We don't want to be too visible; we don't advertise; we don't propagate through media. At the same time, our work must be effective, must be enlarged, must get more and more of the geographical and the human elements into its orbit, ambit. So how are you going to do this? I don't know. I have even thought that prefects should not be allowed to do administrative jobs. Because now I find there is too much tendency in prefects to stick to paperwork and investment of resources, and putting brick and brick together. But at the same time, in his wisdom, my Master decided that prefects would be centres-in-charge. I don't know why. I have asked him several times and he only kept saying, "I can make them do anything that I want (materially) because any quality, any ability, any capacity can be conferred."

So perhaps I am lacking in this and I have to examine myself, whether I have not been going astray on this matter too. It has been suggested to me that, as I was just saying, I am still more of a General Secretary of the Mission than the President. I would say I am almost solely the General Secretary of the Mission, in the sense that I am still doing everything that I used to do as a secretary. Perhaps it is difficult for me to divest myself of that role. Perhaps I too suffer from the ability or inability to trust others and hand over important functions to them. So I am also indulging in a lot of introspection in this matter, because from any change in me must flow change in you. But there is no harm in your trying it on yourselves and telling me the result and saying, "Chari, this is the way it should be done."

So, timber, money, estates, real estates, all this is necessary because there is a body of opinion which says, "Why ashrams?" Well, where are you going to meditate if there is no ashram, when two hundred people, six hundred people gather together? It is a matter of financial wisdom. You know, when we had the Augerans project, there was a great deal of opposition. But then, when it was pointed out that in three years we pay by way of rentals what it would cost us to purchase the ashram in France, everybody agreed. So it doesn't make sense to collect your money and keep paying it out in rentals to others. We are not here to own real estate. As I said, we are here to create facilities which will conduce to the sole purpose of spiritual evolution. They are not meant to be possessions of which the Mission can be proud, they are not meant to be temples, they are not meant to be memorials; they are meant to be places where we can sit and evolve undisturbed by anything.

So I am placing before you my views on how the Mission should shape itself for the future. Prefects must entrust or devote ninety percent of their time to spiritual work and ten percent *only* to all the rest – the mundane aspects of Mission management. If there are prefects who are doing, let us say, the other way around, they must find ways and means of divesting themselves of their responsibilities, sharing it with others – not as a power distribution, I must make this very emphatically clear. There should be no approach of power division or function division or authority division or geographical, territorial division of functions. It must come from the man who is overloaded with work, who says, "Brother, take up some of this. You have free time on your hands. I don't have so much time, relieve me of this." And the other brother must say, "Please, if you can possibly give it to somebody else, do it. Because I don't want to fall into this quagmire of power, position, menacing situations which can make any head go a little crazy."

After all, if you study history, the great men of this world destroyed themselves because at a certain situation or certain level of authority and power they became crazy. They became intoxicated and they lost control over themselves and the powers that they had, whether they were saintly powers, spiritual powers, material powers, military powers, financial powers or, in women, the power of their beauty – they destroy the possessor.

So I want any future, shall we say, dissipation of forces, re-distribution to come from this angle. Not as demands for regional orientation, state-wise orientation, or east coast, west coast orientation or mid-lands – I don't know what all you have in America. The right approach for the right thing is the best way. The wrong approach even for the right thing will doom us, if not to failure, at least to delay. That is why they say, "The end justifies the means." But I believe that the means should justify the end. Right means must result in the right ends being achieved. I cannot feed my family by robbing my neighbour and say that, "The end justifies the means. They needed food, so I robbed."

So, some of these things I would like you to think over again and again. I repeat that the material life of the Mission is no less important than the spiritual life of the Mission. Taking the example of the human system as a fundamental fact, spiritual fact, that the soul embodied in the body alone can be liberated out of this body. That is why in between two lives there is no liberation, otherwise every death should result in liberation and we don't need yoga at all. Similarly, a mission has to have the spiritual component embodied in a material mission. But the material mission must be minimised to serve its purpose, like a vehicle – you get into a taxi and get out, and you don't bother about the make and the model, so long as it will take you there.

So some of the things which have been concerning me, I have tried to place before you. The rest, perhaps in our prefects' conference I will have occasion to dwell upon at greater length again. So I request all of you to cooperate in the building of the Mission, the building of yourselves, the building of your society because, as you know, one single virus in your body is enough to kill you.

So the personal purity, the purity of the Mission alone can lead like a stone dropped in a pond – from that first impact, ripples spread. We must each one be like a small pebble dropped into the ocean of bliss, and those ripples in the ocean of bliss must cover all of humanity, of humankind, human existence. So I pray that all of you may think rightly, act rightly, and achieve what has to be achieved.

Thank you.

3

The True 'I'

We are assembled here today to celebrate the holy and auspicious birth anniversary of my revered and beloved Master, revered Babuji Maharaj. An auspicious occasion is one which is filled with opportunity and promise. The life of my great and benevolent Master affords a perfect example of how opportunities properly grasped and utilised can take an ordinary and humble human being up to the highest and loftiest pinnacles of divinised humanness.

His life, his growth, his culminating achievements offer to us the perfect example of a human life correctly and purposefully lived, utilising each and every opportunity exclusively for the single-minded purpose of becoming a divinised human being, which he has stated emphatically to be the goal of human life.

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30 April 1992, Bangalore, India

The fact that Babuji Maharaj, beginning from humble and average human conditions, was nevertheless able to become a Master of the highest calibre, must build in all of us the firm foundation for the unshakable faith that must imbue our own spiritual lives and add strength and determination to our efforts to achieve what he achieved. His teachings, the practice of Sahaj Marg as a system, and the Mission which he has created for us and pledged to our service form the ladder up which we must climb, step by step, to ensure our own success in this endeavour.

His divine and all-embracing, all-forgiving love heartens and ennobles us with the divine promise of his eternal and abiding service to humanity. This is his promise for our own success in becoming like him, if we would but emulate him in his humanness, in his love and devotion for his Master, in his total faith in the possibility of achieving mergence with his Master, and in the unfaltering dedication to his service.

"You are really that which you have to become," says my divine Master. When we look to the outer world we feel puny, awed by the vastness of the universe, frightened by life with all its awesome responsibilities, weakened by the temptations for desire fulfilment, and anguish and fear envelop us, however manfully we may strive to overcome them. Therefore, the average human person becomes frustrated and is often defeated even before he begins the task for which he has taken birth as a human being. But if one were to look inwards, into the innermost recesses of his or her own Self, then one can see there the effulgent magnificence of Him who resides there within each and every being. He is the real 'I', the Lord and the Master of all creation and of every one of us. When this is perceived, then courage is restored to the one who has seen. The understanding of this vital truth that He is I, and therefore I am no weak, miserable and soulless person but the divine spark covered and made almost invisible by my own self-created grossness, gives us the courage and the determination to undertake the glorious task of unveiling the Lord and Master residing within, exposing Him and hiding ourselves. Then the miracle takes place, that the weak, bitter and purposeless 'I', which has been parading upon the ignoble stage of a worldly existence, drops off, and the true 'I', the Eternal Lord, the Self seated within, emerges, thus bringing our human endeavour to a divinely happy and auspicious culmination.

Sahaj Marg makes a divine adventure a glorious, safe and assured possibility within the short span of a human life. I pray that revered Babuji Maharaj may bless all humanity so that each and every soul lying imprisoned in the darkness of ignorance and grossness may be awakened to this divine possibility which a study of his life reveals to us. One who is not awakened to the possibility of something can never undertake to search for it. My Master's life itself awakens us to our goal, and in emulating him exists the only possibility of becoming like Him. On this auspicious occasion, may his divine love and blessings be showered upon all, so that more and more persons are awakened to this possibility and become enthused and emboldened to strive for it.

4

Activity and Inactivity

I have pleasure in releasing the souvenir commemorating this occasion. Thank you.

I once received a letter from Babuji Maharaj, in answer to a letter I had written to him, in which I said that I was getting increasingly lazy and it was getting difficult to be active. He wrote back and said (I am trying to quote as far as I can remember), "Activity is the life of the body; inaction is the life of the soul. And if you are finding it troublesome in your daily life, you should exercise your will." So, this is something on which I would like all of you to ponder: activity is the life of the body; inaction is the life of the soul. If you find your tendency to be inactive troublesome in your daily life, please apply your will so that you may be active.

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1 May 1992, Bangalore, India

Now several important ideas are contained in these two, three sentences. The first one is that activity is not necessary. It is very difficult for the occidental people to accept this – *activity is not necessary.* The second thing is inaction, which is peace, is a danger. Because if the inactivity of the soul is going to lead to the inactivity of the body, which is what we call peace, then we are going to sort of lapse into some limbo from which there is no release.

So the idea of a balanced existence is how to balance the inactivity of the soul with the activity of the body, understanding that we are in this embodied existence to liberate ourselves from it once and for all. So if we allow this inaction, or this tendency to inaction, to the peace that the soul craves, to pervade our external life, especially in sadhana, possibly that results in what Babuji Maharaj calls the *avadhoota gati,* where an aspirant gets blocked. He goes into states of ecstasy, lapses into peace, will not work, will not act, will not meditate, and says, "I have everything; I have achieved."

I have always wondered why Babuji Maharaj put so much emphasis on what is beyond peace. That's something we are not able to accept, leave alone understand. We don't want to accept that there is something beyond peace. Who wants something beyond peace? We want peace: peace of mind, peace of heart, peace of the soul, peace from our continuous thoughts over which we have no control.

So this peace is, at the same time, an enormous danger to our spiritual progress. Therefore, in the material life we have to be active only to the necessary extent to keep, as we say in India, body and soul together – no more. And what is this balancing of these two things? Not to disturb the peace of the soul by any funny things that we may do which adds grossness; not to interfere with the minimum necessary activities of the body so that our entire existence, worldly existence, becomes endangered.

A funny thought came to me during meditation, that people who are over-addicted to active life, maybe they form a samskara for activity in such a manner that they are somehow sent to another life where they have to be active, super-active, hyperactive, like rickshaw pullers, *thelawalas* [handcart pullers]. It is as if Nature says, "Well, you believe in activity? Do it. Do it physically. Pull rickshaws, pull carts, be stewards on the harbour side, lift cases, until you get fed up with activity and say, "Please release me from this activity." So I wonder sometimes whether these active races of this world are not

people who have been condemned to activity by an addiction to activity, by a worship (a faulty worship) of work, believing in the old adage that work is worship. Which work is worship? In Hindi we have a funny expression – *pate puja* [worship of the stomach]. We have all sorts of funny proverbs and sayings and adages – most of them stupid, nonsense. "A bird in hand is worth two in the bush." I would rather go for the two in the bush. If I succeed, I have two.

So people who crave for peace, and they find it very soon in Sahaj Marg, (I am unfortunately compelled to say this because you *do* find peace as soon as you start sadhana, whether you recognise it or not), the first thing we give up is sadhana itself. People have been asking me, "Why is it that newer aspirants come, meditate for a few months and then go?" Of course, a superficial answer can be that they came with material interests, material aspirations, material problems – they have been solved and the purpose of their coming to Sahaj Marg has been fulfilled – so they stopped. But I don't think that is the only answer. It is the superficial answer, but perhaps the answer lies deeper in that these fellows, these abhyasis who come, the first touch of the divine hand of the Master, what we call '*divya sparsha*', the moment it touches, the soul becomes at peace; it achieves its rest.

Now the soul does not know anything about liberation or non-liberation, because for the soul there is no liberation. The soul is eternal, immutable, an *amsha* or a part or, as we say, a divine spark of the Divinity itself. So with this first touch of peace it says, "Okay, what have I to do?" The soul really does not do anything. It does not have to aspire to anything. It is *me* in the body who has to do all this in the conscious existence. But when the soul, the peace of the soul, inevitably affects our waking life, the soul continues in its transit through life after life. This is very important to understand, that the soul is not liberated. We say, 'a liberated soul', but [liberated] from what? From the bondages of an earthly existence, from the bondages of a life which is pulled down and kept down by the weight of its samskaras. So, until this liberation from this life is achieved, the soul has to be kept in some way alert.

Therefore Babuji Maharaj said, "The will must be trained in such a way that even in sleep, the will must act." Which sleep? Of course, I have myself given the example so many times of mosquitoes, which Babuji Maharaj has also said, that in our sleep we roll over on a mosquito and kill it. We kill a mosquito which is on our face, unconsciously, because we are asleep. So there is an activity of the body during sleep. I mean, anybody who knows anything about physiology knows that the circulation is going on – the nervous system is at a basic level, the metabolism is at low ebb, but everything is still active. But if that state comes into the waking state of the day and we are as if we are asleep, uninterested in everything, unable to do anything, a sort of comatose-waking condition (I have seen these things happen), then what happens? Then the very sadhana that we practise, which gives us this first touch of peace, condemns us to, shall we say, recurring existences. Therefore, it is not enough to be alert when we are awake; we have to be alert when we are asleep.

Therefore perhaps, in the Gita, Lord Krishna says, "When everybody else is awake, I am asleep. When everybody else is asleep, I am awake." Who is this 'I', who must be awake? It is the inner I – the soul. The soul need not be active, but it must be alert. Now, alertness is a condition in which we are not active, but we are aware. Activity, in the physical sense or in the mental sense, is necessary to do and to achieve something. So we have to be active. How active? To the sufficient extent. Meditation for one hour. (Of course, nobody does it.) One hour is too short when you think of other *sansthas* [organisations] where they ask you to meditate for four hours, when you hear of the rishis of the past meditating continuously all day and night for years. We are doing literally nothing.

But this effect of the transmission is so profound; the effect of the cleaning is so profound. Most abhyasis do not know to recognise the effect of the transmission and the effect of cleaning. They confuse, they mix up. Every time we sit in meditation and we feel lighter and lighter, it is because grossness has been removed. Not because of the transmission; it is the effect of cleaning. It is like a man who puts his burden down and feels, "I am light."

Now this business of sleeping: when we start the journey, you can see with little children, they are clamouring to go out. You take a child on your lap and the car starts – within the first three minutes the child is asleep. I have often wondered why. It is not only children, it's even adults! They are sitting in the back. If they are sufficiently relaxed not to worry about an accident, they also fall asleep. Why when the journey starts, for which the child has been hankering all day, pestering you all day, why that child should fall asleep within the first three minutes in the car? Because the condition that is created by motion is conducive to sleep. So when the soul starts on its path towards its goal, we behave like little children. We go to sleep, and when we wake up we start weeping all over again, "You did not take me out today. My Master has done nothing for me. Sahaj Marg is useless."

So we have to be alert to the teachings of Babuji Maharaj. He said things in a few words: "Activity is the life of the body; inaction is the life of the soul." Now how can something which is totally inert (total inactivity is inertness) be alive? But we must realise that the soul is neither dead nor alive. We cannot say that the soul lives. It *is*. That is why we say *sat-chit-anandam* [existence, consciousness, bliss]. Existence – everything which exists need not be alive; everything which is alive perhaps doesn't exist too.

So this important message, that only from the embodied existence can the soul liberate itself, is very important to understand. It is as if a bird must enter a cage to be released from that cage. What makes it enter that cage is grossness, its attachment to cages, past existences in which it has gloried in cages of gold and diamonds. So it comes back into a cage. Now from that cage it has to, once and for all, liberate itself by being alert to the fact that without this bodily existence, liberation is impossible. At the same time, this bodily existence is no more important than to fulfil its purpose. When the purpose is fulfilled, we must be willing to say goodbye to this existence.

Now, I was talking to our brother about goals. I perhaps did not explain myself fully to him. I was amazed with this idea, this enormously intelligent and wise idea of Sahaj Marg, of our Masters, in giving us a goal which has no definition, which has no location in space, which has no location in time, in fact which is extraordinarily vague, ambiguous, and to call it a goal would be something of utter nonsensical content. What is a goal when you cannot say where it is, how it is and when it is? Towards Infinity! I was suggesting on one of my walks that when we have a goal, it limits our capacity. I mean, an achievable goal, a specifiable goal, a goal which can be said – this, here, now – it stultifies our activity, it limits our activity. "Oh! You say so? Well, I can do it tomorrow." That's the first reaction. "Bombay? Why not go tomorrow? What is so wonderful? Bombay is not going to run away. Baghdad? It has been there for centuries. What if I miss today's flight? Tomorrow I can go, day after tomorrow, next year perhaps."

First thing is weakness of effort – postponement, prevarication: "Not today, tomorrow." Second thing is that it limits our effort in terms of energy expended. I was giving the example of the four-minute mile. Why should only

Roger Bannister break the four-minute barrier and not hundreds and thousands of human beings who have been living for centuries before him? Because in their mind they thought it's impossible. Seven-minute mile – it was broken: 6 minutes 57 seconds. Then as clocks and watches became more and more accurate, the 6 minutes 56 seconds was broken down to 6 minutes 55.55 seconds. You see how time affects us. We are not really trying to create a new record. We are only trying to break an old record, established record. So it took centuries for a man to run a mile in four minutes. Had it been shown that it was possible, or had anybody realised that it was possible, it would have been run centuries ago before the Olympic tradition came into this world.

So a goal, a target, limits our energy output. We don't work enough. If my neighbour has one car, I want two cars, or a car and a refrigerator. If he is earning five thousand, if I earn five thousand two hundred, it's enough; I have beaten him. So our efforts are marginally directed. Instead of totally directed, they become marginally directed. If you had only clocks with minutes and no seconds at all, there would have been better records much sooner. Today you see this funny fantasy, you know, 1 minute 11.57 seconds. Next record (it might be a horse race), 1 minute 11.55 seconds – 0.02 seconds difference – it's a new record. So every record, every goal which is specifiable in terms of space and time, limits our endeavours. Also, naturally, it limits our achievement. What have you achieved after all? Just breaking a target – breaking your head.

So the wisdom of Sahaj Marg says, no more of this foolishness. Infinity is your goal. Where is it? At the end of infinity. What is it? Infinity itself. Blah-blah, in one sense. Because people who don't want to understand, they say, "What is this infinite goal? Should there not be a termination to every journey? Should there not be a specifiable destination? What is this nonsense that every time I reach out, the goal is a little more distant from me?"

It is like that famous 'fool's gold', which is supposed to be at the end of a rainbow. The rainbow is there. You can literally see it. But you run towards it, and there is no more any rainbow, no more gold. It is also like one of the stories I read, which was a very beautiful story about a boy living all alone with his grandfather on the top of a mountain in a little cottage, and he wanted to see the light and he went searching and searching and searching, and at last he reached a very dark place. And he asked, "Have you seen the light?" They said, "Yes, look there." And on top of the mountain there was brilliant light. All the windows of his house were reflecting the golden light. He has run away from the golden light to find the golden light, instead of looking for it where he is.

So, in that sense, the goal is right where we are. When is it? It is *now,* provided – as Babuji Maharaj used to put it so beautifully, "Here and now" – you can throw away everything in one shot. Now who is there, here and now, whom I can grasp at once in an act of, shall we say, total surrender? It is only the Master. So those who are looking for a goal without a Master being of that sort, of that calibre, who represents the Infinity in himself like our Master, they have to go on and on and on, slipping back a little, going forward a little, slipping back a little, going forward a little, through centuries, through aeons of time. Sum total of achievement: zero. Because as long as you are here, what is that you have achieved?

When the Gita says that Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, everybody has to come down here to this *karma bhumi* [field of action] and work for their salvation and for their liberation all over again, is this the fate of a Brahma and a Vishnu whom we worship? Are we not superior beings, in the sense that we have a superiority of opportunity which is denied to them? They cannot come down until their work is finished. They are slaves of their own perfection, which was not enough to give them liberation.

Perfection is a wrong concept. The Westerners are addicted to perfection. "God is the only perfect being," Babuji Maharaj said. I used to wonder why. Because God has no mind, He doesn't work, He doesn't do anything. Yet Babuji said, "He is the only perfect being." There lies the secret. No mind, no work, no achievement – perfect. Now, where can you find this? Only in meditation.

When you go into the deepest levels of your being, there is no more meditation, there is no more experience, the mind is no more working upon you, though through the mind you have gone into those, shall we say, bottomless pits in yourself, into that eternity which is lying hidden inside. In that absolute *samadhi* [state of original balance] there is no more activity, there is no more mind, there is no more intellect, there is not even the body, because it is wrong to say that you are inside your body. Inside your body, eternity does not exist. But yet it is inside because it is in my heart. Therefore the true infinity is the heart; not the purse, not the intelligence, not the intellect, not health, not wealth, not strength – but the heart.

Therefore the second piece of the greatest wisdom of Babuji Maharaj and Lalaji Maharaj

[is] deciding upon the place of meditation, the seat of meditation, in the heart. There is that enclosed space, which is at the same time infinity, when we have the ability and the capacity and the willingness to give up our hold, our attachment to a limited space and a limited time, in our search for eternity in space and time.

So the greatness of this system of meditation is that, if you are looking for a concrete goal, even if it is the Master himself in concretised terms of a human presence, we miss and we have to go on and on and on. If you are looking for the goal as something which is ephemeral yet achievable, which is not really existent in terms of time and space but yet is within us, which may take infinity of time but at the same time can be achieved here and now, then it is possible in one act, as I said, of total surrender to plunge into that Infinity. Achieve that goal by plunging into Him who is that Goal.

You know in mathematics, infinity has a symbol. You cannot have anything more than a symbol. How can you say infinity in terms of numbers? For instance, I once read Fred Hoyle, who said, "The total number of particles in this universe is no more than 10^{81}." It appears ridiculous: 10^{81} is the total number of particles in this universe? So matter, however vast the universe, however unimaginably big, yet it can be represented in numbers: 10^{81}, it may be10^{91}, 10^{9000}, yet it is only six numbers put together. 10^{9000} is no more than 10^{81}. What does it matter? It is specifiable in numbers.

Mathematics is a limit. Mathematics deals with limits; it deals with sums; it deals with numbers; it deals with that which can be specified. Even when it uses a symbol, it is using the symbol to come back to material terms: let x be the answer in algebra, to find a number. Here we have to use the opposite technique, using numbers. One – what is number one? The original, the beginning – one Master, one Mission, one Method. No multiplicity, no second digit, not even multiplied by two – one and only one.

And from that one and only one, without transiting any numbers or series of numbers, to go to that symbol is specified like this [gesturing with fingers the symbol for infinity], which is infinity – two zeros put together. Now which must be the two zeros that are put together? I am playing with figures and words, but this is to enable you to understand. Which are the two zeros to be to put together? One, that zero which is eternally zero, which is eternally partaking of the nature of nothingness, and my own existence, which must be brought down to that nothingness.

Now, as the French would say, *"Voila!"* This zero and that zero, and there you have infinity!

So why should we be nothing? Why should we aspire for that state of nothingness? Why should we have to give up progressively everything, little by little, or to put it in another way, why is it necessary to give up everything in one stroke, which is what we call surrender? Giving up little by little is like reducing smoking: twenty cigarettes today, eighteen cigarettes per day next week, sixteen cigarettes per day the third week – it doesn't work. Nothing which is not given up in one instant of time can ever be given up. It may be anything.

There is no such thing as a bad habit. The badness in a habit is when the habit masters us instead of our mastering what we call the habit. When we are masters of the situation, there is no more a habit. Repetitive work does not mean habit. Babuji was transmitting every day. It does not mean that he was a habitual transmitter. He transmitted purposefully, yet it was the same story all over again – cleaning, transmission, sitting.

I used to wonder why this old man doesn't get bored. I mean, day after day after day repeating the same thing ad nauseam: giving a sitting, cleaning the fellow, talking about it; then next man coming, giving him a sitting, cleaning the fellow, transmitting something. Endlessly he was doing it, tirelessly he was doing it; most importantly, he did it without any boredom. Now I realised why he wasn't bored, because now I don't feel bored myself. Why? Because it is repetitive but at the same time it is not repetitive. It is like children. Children are born all the time, thousands of them every minute, but no two children are alike. Flowers are blossoming all the time, no two flowers are alike. No two leaves of a tree are alike.

So in this apparently boring work, repetitive work, we find that it is not boring because it is not repetitive. Every case is different, every sitting is different, if you handle it diligently with your eyes open – as Babuji used to say, "He who has eyes to see, let him see." If there exists such a person, for him each work is a new revelation. Every single case teaches you, but you must have the patience and the attitude of a learner: "Let me see what this can teach me." This gives you at the same time (especially to prefects I am addressing this) a humility, because every abhyasi who comes and sits before you adds to your own knowledge, adds to your experience. Good doctors and bad doctors – this is the difference. For a good doctor, each operation is a different case, it is unique.

For a bad doctor: "Oh, one more cataract? I have already done twenty-eight!" Or like some of these doctors who do these eye camps you know: 786 cataract operations in one day! He is breaking a record. He is not really treating a patient; he is breaking a record. This fellow says, "Another cataract, for heaven's sake! But four thousand rupees, you see." So, this fellow has sold his soul for money; that fellow is selling his soul to break a record. Where is the good doctor in between?

So prefects must understand that when we approach our work as loyal workers for the Master, who are interested in every human being who comes to sit before you, first you must be interested enough to see why this man comes. What are the problems? How can they be removed? *He* is the one who gives liberation, realisation, merger. We work to do what we can, at this moment in time.

Remember that old anonymous saying: "I may pass this way but once; any good that I can do, therefore let me do now, for I may never pass this way again." We are only working for our liberation. Even prefects, they are in a sense faithless (in the sense that they are acting faithlessly), if they are working for their own liberation. A prefect has no need to be worried about his liberation, has no business to be worried about his liberation because his liberation is in His hands. He is no more working upon himself.

In 1972, when we were in the United States for the first time, Babuji Maharaj called me one morning to himself and said, "From today, no more meditation for you but your meditation time must be given to me. The time that you spend on meditation must be given to me." I thought it was a very simple transaction in which I profited immensely. But that is the first step in the quicksand of spirituality. If you resist, you go down very fast. If you have the intelligence to float, you can continue to float and do the work, and when He says, "Now be erect and go down", we go down. So, what is meditation for? I have not been meditating after 1972 at all – except when I am really troubled or I have to pray for somebody who is in a very critical stage, spiritually speaking, then I sit and meditate. Otherwise I don't meditate. What for?

Therefore, at the same time the sadhana is silly, but as an expression of our obedience, we have to do it. He says do it, we do it. One hour, we sit for one hour. Not out of the idea that I am going to heaven or get liberation, because without Him wishing to give you liberation, you may meditate continuously for all time, you are not getting anywhere. That is why there are sincere aspirants who are not, shall we say, in the true sense devoted to the Master, who are meditating literally for hours every day, doing cleaning again and again and again. It has become an obsession with them. Now an obsession cannot give you freedom because obsessions hold you in their grip. Obsessive meditation is as bad as obsessive drinking or obsessive drugs.

So meditation must be light, must be free. And when can it be light and free? When you are not attaching strings to your meditation that, "I am meditating, therefore I must be liberated." Who are you to ask? Who are you to demand? Does it lie in your power? Babuji Maharaj said, "Only he gets to whom He wishes to give." *"Yamaiva-esha-vrunute-tena-labhyah"* [He is obtained only by him whom He chooses] – the Veda has already said it long ago. Babuji said it in Hindi and English.

So the only way of getting these things is by showing our increasing love for the Master: obedience because of love, not because of fear. "He has said it; I am his son, I must do it." It must be instinctive. It must be automatic. There must be no thinking behind this obedience. Then it becomes possible that the Master says, "Now no more meditation for you, no more cleaning for you, leave it all to me. Because what might take you ten lifetimes to clean, I can clean in one second", which he put very beautifully when he said, "Lalaji Maharaj could liberate a person with a blink of his eye." What does it take a Master to liberate a human soul? Time? How can the Master of time need time? He *is* time. *"Kaalosmi,"* says Lord Krishna in the Gita – "I am time." Now time cannot need time. It becomes ridiculous even in terms of physics. How can time take time to time itself? It's not possible.

So with masters of calibre who are at our service – service without servility – they are not our servants; many of us use them as our servants, but they are at our service though they are our Masters. For them there is no time, there is no space. Where can he do it? Anywhere. When can he do it? Any 'when'. *Now,* if you are willing.

So we have to liberate ourselves first from all our stupid misunderstandings of the Sahaj Marg system. Get on with the job, but don't think. Don't delude yourself with the thought that sadhana is taking you to the goal. As any other Sadhana [a girl's name], this sadhana is also a female and she can lead you up the garden path but not to the goal. Enticing Sadhanas; alluring sadhana – so alluring that people prefer to meditate and not go to see the Master; so alluring that they say, "Wherever I am, I am sitting in meditation [as]

Babuji said, so I should get it here"; so alluring that they forget the Master in their meditation! Beware of sadhana, she too is a female and I call females very tricky. So participate, but don't trust in your sadhana. Your sadhana without your Master is no use. But if you are stuck to your Master with bonds of love, you can just throw aside sadhana.

So there comes a time in the *sadhaka's* [practicant's] life when no longer he is a sadhaka, but a bhakta [devotee]. It is important to realise that a sadhaka must become a bhakta. If he remains a sadhaka, he achieves nothing. The moment he becomes a bhakta – *"Bhaktaaste ativa me priyaah,"* Lord Krishna says – "They are my most beloved." "Whom do you love most?" Arjuna asks. Krishna says, "My bhaktas." He didn't mention the rishis, he didn't mention the saints. So a saint is no use unless he is a bhakta too; a rishi is no use unless he is a bhakta too. Bhakta first; rishi or *muni* [saint] or whatever you want afterwards, if He chooses to make it.

So let us not go behind saintliness and rishihood. Let us stick to the Master. Let us love him so much that he cannot say no to anything and he has to take us within himself. Remembering the story of the kangaroo, about which Babuji said that it takes its offspring within itself whenever there is danger. Other times the baby kangaroo is free to jump around.

So we have that freedom to jump around with his permission, whenever there is free time, and he says, "Okay, have a little fun." When there is danger, he says, "Come", you must come. "Get into my belly sack." Yes, I have to get into your belly sack. "Oh, but I love this freedom so much." "All right! Remain in that freedom which is illusory, which is dangerous, which is death." Freedom can be death when there is no Master to govern that freedom, guide that freedom, regulate that freedom.

Thank you.

5

Meditate and You Will Know

What I am going to say, you may not have expected. I hope it's not a shock. I don't know what is the difference between a clarification and a speech. What I said in the morning was necessary to say, so I said it. What I am going to say now is probably because I am tired, I am disappointed. Because after twenty-five years we are still discussing about what is transmission, what is Master, what is ashram, what is *devalayam* [temple]. To me it is a big disappointment. I won't say it's a shock, because where human beings are concerned, I have come to a stage where nothing surprises me, not any more. I have seen the foolishness of the wisest and the wisdom of the most foolish.

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14 May 1992, Hyderabad, India

So nothing is surprising any more. But still, here we are celebrating the silver jubilee of this Hyderabad centre, and we are still talking about Master, Mission, Method; difference between a temple and a meditation hall.... We have a joke in Tamil, that there was a big Ramayana *kathakalakshepam* [discourse] going on for ten days. When it was finished, one man asked his neighbour, "What is this Rama and Sita? What was their relationship? Who was Rama? Who was Sita? *Yemandi idi?* [What is this?] Ten days we have been hearing, but I don't know what's going on here!"

So, like that, our Sahaj Marg is appearing to drift along. Every time we meet, we speak of the same thing; it is becoming a bit tiresome. I would like people to discuss more about progress: what is progress? Who is progressing? I don't hear any talk of progress. How can we? Because we seem to be building foundations and then moving on to the next house to build another foundation – the super-structure is not appearing. Sometimes [when] you go to these big cities you can find a hundred such houses – basement is ready but nothing on top.

So I would be very sad if all that is being done in Sahaj Marg, in Shri Ram Chandra Mission, is to go on repeating, ad nauseam, the story of

Lalaji and Babuji and Chariji. This is getting to be something like the Ramayana. "Rama married Sita. They went to the *vanavasa* [exile]. Hanuman went and rescued her, and they came back and they were ever happy afterwards." You can tell the Ramayana in three sentences; you can say it in thirty days.

So, we have to wake up. Let us not worry about who is the guru and what is the guru. It is like examining a medicine bottle when a man is dying. "What is the constituent?" "It is alpha-beta-hexo-chloro-phenol." Whatever it may be, I don't know. And then discussing whether it should be beta-alpha or alpha-beta. When a man is dying, the doctor should give him the medicine first and talk afterwards. And if it is a wise patient, if he wants to live, he should accept the medicine and stop talking altogether.

Here we have too much talk. And Babuji Maharaj told me, "Where there is too much talk, there is little done." Action and words don't go together much, and it is a bit bothersome, it is a bit troublesome to me. I feel also, in a certain sense, upset that we hear the same things – the same thing about Master: Who is the Master? What is Master? I mean, to hell with the Master! Sit down and do your work – you will know. Meditate – you will know.

Babuji Maharaj has said, "If you want to know who is this Special Personality, sit down and meditate – you will know." Why all this argument and discussion and disputation? It is not seemly, especially when we are celebrating the silver jubilee. I am happy that I will not be here to celebrate your golden jubilee, because if I am going to hear this sort of thing again, I would be so nauseated that I will probably disappear instantly like a puff of smoke.

So I would like all of you to stop this nonsense altogether now. If you don't know who is your Master, you should find him. If you don't know where he is, look for him. If you know who he is, accept him. There is too much of this discussion. It is like a wife and a husband have been married and have come, and the parents are discussing whether she's *really* his wife or not! "How do you know that it was a real marriage? After all he tied only a *taali* [sacred thread worn by married women] around her neck." What else do you want to do? Is it not enough that a *taali* was tied?

So I end not with the prayer for all of you but with a prayer in general, that we should stop talking rubbish. We are none of us qualified to talk about the Master. It *is* what it *is*. As Babuji Maharaj said about God: "What is God?" "God is

God." "Is that all you have to say?" "Well, what else can you say?"

So, if at all I have a message today, it is [to] get on with your job of meditation and cleaning – forget everything else. Then perhaps you will be able to speak in wiser words about wiser subjects, about more necessary things, instead of going on washing the same dirty cloth in the same dirty river and tearing it to bits and pieces until you don't even have one strand of the original cloth in your hand. If this sort of thing goes on too much, you are in danger of losing your Master (I mean whoever he may be) – because someday he is going to get totally frustrated and say, "Bye-bye."

Thank you.

6

The Essence of the Master

Yesterday I spoke about memories and remembrance. I want to share some more thoughts which have come up since I spoke yesterday. Now it is very important to understand this difference, because memories we are dredging up from the past, they have no real existence; they are dead, they are [doomed] into the limbo of time. I would, in this connection, observe [that] ritual worship has no meaning.

If you worship Matsya and Kurma and Varaha [the first three incarnations of Lord Vishnu – the fish, the tortoise and the boar], it has no meaning today. There is a *yugapurusha* of this *yuga* [the Lord of this aeon], Kaliyuga – he is Lord Krishna. If at all we have to appeal to any yugapurusha, we have to appeal to the yugapurusha of my yuga today. It is no use appealing to [a past president].

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1 June 1992, Hyderabad, India

You have to appeal to today's president. One in office alone can do something, whether it is in the Godly level or in the saintly level or in the human level. So we are always going to the past – Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha. What is all this nonsense? All right, we respect them, they were avatars of the past. They had their time, they had their sway, they had their empire, they had the time of their governance.

Past presidents, past gods – not dead gods as some people say; that is wrong. Gods never die. Past gods – to be put in our *kolu* (Navratri) [display of dolls in the home during the Navratri festival]. So what I am trying to say is, like the past, gods have no meaning today – they cannot do anything for us. Babuji Maharaj has said, "Gods have no meaning; they are also functionaries in their own place." I used to wonder why there is no temple to Brahma. I have not found a temple to Brahma; I have not seen anywhere in India a Matsya temple.

The only earliest avatar I found was Adi Varaha Kshetra [the holy place where a temple is dedicated to the Varaha avatar] in Sriperumbudur, where unfortunately our last Prime Minister was assassinated, where Ramanuja was born (Sriperumbudur) – Adi Varaha Kshetra they call it. [For] Narasimha, of course, there are a lot of temples. So even in worship the past has gone. In some way the Matsya, the Kurma {avatars} have been forgotten; Brahma has no place – he comes, he creates and then, I suppose, he goes back into the Source from which he originated. Vishnu continues till the end because he is the protector. Shiva perhaps will come in only at the end, when it is the time for destruction. This is perhaps why all the avatars are avatars of Narayana, not of other gods. You don't hear of Brahma's avatar, for instance. You understand?

So when we have memories we are taking up, like rubbish from the well, periodically we have to clean the well, {and you find everything} that is gone. You find a *sombu* {small vessel} that has fallen in, you find a child's toy, you find a silver spoon – they are all there. Now this tradition you also have in the *amrita manthana* {churning of the ocean for the nectar that gives immortality} business – all the rubbish comes. What is the use of all that rubbish? For amrita to come, you have to wait for the last. You have Vasuki {the great snake used as a rope for churning the ocean}, you have Mount Meru {used as a rod for churning the ocean}, and you have the *sagara* {ocean}. Now this symbol is one of meditation. When you meditate, you get all sorts of rubbish coming from inside – memories, reflections, dreams. Carl

Gustav Jung's autobiography is called *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* – [it is] of no meaning to us.

So when we talk of memories, we are talking of events, of places – nouns, in fact (persons, places, things). In any case, it is past. It has no value in the present, it has no meaning in the present, it has no relevance; it cannot affect unless we allow it to affect. Now how can we allow it to affect? Because we sit and say, "Oh, I was such a wonderful man, today I am useless", and we are weeping. Now that past is affecting us in the wrong way.

Remembrance – this is a very important point – when we remember Him alone, without reference to his qualities, without reference to his attributes, it is really remembrance of God. Because God has no qualities, God has no form, God has no attributes. So when we can remember the Master without form, without qualities, without attributes: "I remember Master." No more any name too for him, not his kindness, not his gentleness, not his beard, not his hookah, not his wonderful laugh, not his personality, not his beauty. All definitely there, but they are beguiling us in one direction or the other. If I am able to remember Him alone, without qualities, name and attributes, then remembrance of the Master is the same as remembrance of God.

In this way, Sahaj Marg helps us to have constant remembrance of the Ultimate. We have a Master with all his qualities, with all his attributes, with all his love for us. Remove everything and come to the base, the essence of his existence – there is Divinity. So, so long as you can remember your Master only through his actions, through his speeches, through his attributes, however divine they may have been, you are falling short of the mark. So it is very important to understand this concept of constant remembrance precisely: remember Him and Him alone.

Remember what Babuji said in his Munich message: "Divinity is a play." So whatever he did was a play, what you call a Krishna Lila [Lord Krishna's divine play]. Our Ram Chandraji also had his own *lila.* Krishna used his *maya* [illusion]; our Ram Chandraji also used his *maya.* He used his smile to divert our attention away from the goal. It was like you put tea, strain the tea and get the essence out of it and throw away the leaves. He was practising it very nicely in a very refined, very loving, very kind way, so that we never noticed that he was really selecting from the whole of humanity. He did not test, it is true. He said, "I never test, I don't have to test." It is true. Why the Divine has to test? It knows what is in front of It.

Nevertheless, I have known personally that sometimes when he was very angry, he was most kind to us. Like a doctor who has to give you an injection cannot say, "I am a loving doctor. I will not give you pain. Take this medicine orally." If you need surgery, you have to be put under anaesthetic; you have to be operated. That is the doctor's kindness. The doctor's kindness depends on your sickness. If you are sick in such a small way that he can be kind and say, "All right, you can have one *laddu* [sweet] and one ice cream today", he is kind because your sickness does not deserve anything else. If he says, "No more sweets", "Oh, what is this doctor, sir? He is taking two hundred rupees fees and says no more sweets." But that is his kindness. If he says, "No more alcohol, my friend, your liver is going", that is his kindness. If he says, "If you take another drop, don't come to me", that is his final kindness. If he says, "Tomorrow I have to operate. Come at eight o'clock. No food, nothing in your stomach, enema", that is his kindness too because he is doing it for *your* good. Kindness really is what is done for our good, not to please us. Any fool can please us. If you only want to be pleased, you can go to the streets. Every shopkeeper wants to please you; every cheat wants to please you; every gambler wants to please you.

In pleasure, in being pleased, there is deception, there is cheating, there is lying; in the true kindness, there is always pain. If Master says, "What are you doing? You are not meditating", you must listen to him. If he says, "If you do not meditate, I will have to think about you", you must thank him, fall at his feet and say, "Blessed am I that I have got such a Master." If he says, "Five days [of] fasting", you must rejoice because something great is going to be given to you in return. But if he says, "No, no, you have a feast every morning and every night", you must suspect that master. "What is this fellow doing to me? He is allowing me to indulge myself."

I was once travelling from Bombay to Bulsar. (I used to travel very often.) I had a first class coach, a seat. I was smoking in the compartment. Outside there was a *swami* [monk] surrounded by about 250 members of the cinema profession – stars, actors, actresses, producers, directors, financiers, and I thought, "Well, he is happy, they are happy." I was a little suspicious of the swami because there were only film stars and film people, all intent on money making. Just about when the guard gave his whistle and waved the flag, this swami came into my compartment. I said, "*Aiyyo!* What is this nonsense?" I was hoping to sit alone, read my book, continue to smoke on my way. Immediately I put the cigarette out, threw it out. Swamiji said, "My son, why are you throwing away the cigarette?" I said, "Swamiji, I cannot smoke in your presence." He said, "This world is for enjoyment. *(Ye duniya jo hai, bhogne keliye hai, bhog jeevan keliye hai.)* Why God created beautiful things, pretty things, nice things? If you do not enjoy, you are betraying God." That was his philosophy! Very nice philosophy – therefore all the film stars and the film people went to him, and paid him a lot of money, I'm sure.

Things in this world are not to be enjoyed or to be rejected or to be suffered. Everything is to be used appropriately, at the right time, for our evolution. This is wisdom. We have poisons which are medicines but to be used only when we are very sick. In homeopathy we have nosodes. They are given at the right time, for the right disease. So there is nothing in nature which God created which is bad. Everything is useful; there is no good, there is no bad. Everything is useful, to be used by us when necessary.

So, this world is not for pleasure, it is not for pain. Therefore, in Sahaj Marg, there is no *bhoga jivana* [life of enjoyment]; there is also no asceticism. There is no fire walking, sleeping on nails, celibacy, all this nonsense. There is a normalisation of life, utilisation of the faculties given to us, everyone, in the right way – all with the sole aim of how I can evolve using these *panchendriyas* [five senses] I have got; the *karmendriyas* [five organs of action], the *jnanendriyas* [five cognitive senses], my body, my mind, my intellect – everything to be used with the only and sole purpose of my spiritual evolution. Such a person is wise. For him there are no vices, there are no virtues. He neither sins nor is he virtuous; he neither enjoys nor suffers; he has no bliss to look forward to. Remember that we have to go beyond bliss too. And all this is *only* possible first through sadhana, through constant remembrance and through what that constant remembrance is supposed to create – love for the Master.

Therefore I was a bit annoyed yesterday when we are going on talking, "Who is the Master? Who is the Master?" It is like a girl marrying and saying, "Is this fellow really my husband? No doubt I have borne him one son, but is he really my husband?" So if you are here and you think, "Is this fellow really my Master?" you must think, what are *you* now. The situation is the same.

So forget all this business of 'Master'. I have told you that the Master has no name, no form, no attributes. If he is divine, he cannot have these things. And we believe that our Masters are divine. Now in remembering them, if I am able to remember Him without all these attributes, however wonderful, attractive, *akarshana shakti* [force of attraction] there may be... I am fascinated by my Master's qualities. I have never seen another person like him. Yet, the biggest test of my faith is to remember him without these qualities.

I used to laugh when western technologists produced coffee without caffeine, tobacco without caffeine or tannin, decaffeinated coffee. I used to laugh: "What is coffee without caffeine in it? What is sugar without sweetness in it?" Isn't it? But what is Master without his qualities? Well, that is the true Master. In Master's case, he must be like decaffeinated coffee; he must be like sugarless sugar, saltless salt. Even, I would say, Godless God. "Divinity is a play, divine the way." Divine is only a way. It is no more than a way; it is a *marga* [path].

So, so long as we stick to his qualities, his lovely beard, the bubbling of his hookah, his wonderful enchanting smile, his unfailing generosity and courtesy, his humanity, his perfection as a householder, his blankets, his pillows.... I have even smoked his cigarettes. He once sent me two boxes of cigars from Shahjahanpur through an abhyasi who was visiting him and told him, "*Ye uske ghar mein mat* *do, uske pitaji use chappal marenge. Ise daftar mein de aao."* [Don't give this in his house, his father will beat him with slippers. Give these in his office.] He had so much consideration that he could think that if it came to my house, it would be a disaster. My father would say, "Who is this for?" I would be tempted to lie: "It is not for me. I have to give it to somebody else", quietly take it to my office and smoke it there.

He remembered every feature. For him it is necessary to remember us, because he has to deal with us, with our qualities, with our tendencies, with our samskaras. Poor man! That was his destiny. Our Master had by far the most difficult job. He has said that if he did not remember his Master even for one second, he could not exist. So he had to remember his Master without any form or attributes. At the same time he had to remember all of us – our attributes, our qualities, our nature, so that he could work on us and correct. We have *only* to remember the Master. How much easier it is for us?

As abhyasis, we have only half the work to do as far as remembrance is concerned. We have only one person to remember. He had to remember every abhyasi, every abhyasi's temperament, nature, samskara. Of course he was always saying, *"Hum bhool gaye"* [I forgot], but it was not right.

That was also one of his ways. Because he could tell you after twenty years… Suppose he met an abhyasi after twenty years, he could precisely say what was the condition of this man twenty years ago and what it is now – *precisely!*

I am also happy to say that he was not lying when he said, "I don't remember", because he did not use memory for that purpose. He used the *richas* – your photograph in the cosmic, taken twenty years ago – "Aha" – compare. That is why, whenever he looked at an abhyasi, he looked like this [intently] two, three times. Anybody who has met him and been sitting in front of him knows that this is a fact. He would look at you and that was enough. He had your whole life in that glance. How? Not from memory; not from looking into the past, but looking in the present into the two photographs of you, like a child looks at an album, at itself and its father, or a grown-up man looks at himself as a three-year-old baby and as a college student and as himself, with his wife in the present. Then of course, if we made the grade, if he succeeded and we succeeded – because his success is our success, and our failure is only our failure, there is no failure for the Master – then he no longer had to look there and look here, he only looked here [at the heart]. So he could look and smile and talk to you and say, "Yes, I am happy."

So, we have to remember that this faculty of memory is something which is dangerous. It is alright for the mundane world. How much money I had in my pocket yesterday? Do I have the same amount today or did somebody pinch something from it? Yes. But as far as constant remembrance is concerned, please remember that remembrance of the Master, if it is to be the same as remembrance of God – if 'A is equal to B is equal to C' is to be correct – if 'remembrance of A is to be in remembrance of B is to be in remembrance of C' is to be correct – then A has to be made into C. I have to make my Master a God. How? By removing everything from him which is purely human and then meditate on that which has no form, no name, no attributes.

Therefore, Sahaj Marg really teaches us how to worship God in his absolute, in his essence, in his divine form, which is formless, nameless, attributeless, by giving us a Master with form, with name, with attributes, whom we can love, and then remove everything to worship him in his essence.

Thank you.

7

Duty to Myself

The problem is, really we have nothing to speak. If you would like to meditate, I will give you a sitting for half an hour; you experience it. *Abhi* [now], difference – you are asking, "What is the difference?" Something doesn't have to be really different to draw your attention to it. Isn't it? Why should it be different? Has it necessarily to be different from what Maheshwari says or J. Krishnamurthy says? *Dhyana* [meditation] is dhyana. Kamlesh Patel is Kamlesh Patel in New York, he is Kamlesh Patel in Ahmedabad. Are you different there and are you different here? Perhaps in some ways, perhaps not in other ways. So, this question of difference – I am always perplexed why people say, "What is the difference?" People ask, "What is the commonness in these meditative techniques?"

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22 July 1992, Ahmedabad, India

Q: This question, because others said it is different; someone said [that] everyone says nirvana is very difficult, but we say it is not difficult. So, that question of difference arose from those speeches....

PR: Fair enough. What I am trying to tell you is, there is always some similarity, there is always some difference. All the cows are the same, but in some way they are different. All the leaves of a tree are the same, in some ways they are different. Nature does not produce anything which is duplicated by anything else. This is a well-known truth. So no two systems can be the same. At the same time they are all based on certain fundamental truths. As you yourself said, Patanjali's raja yoga, it is supposed to be the foundation of our culture. Good enough, so we start from that. We meditate.

What is different? We don't start with *yama* [restraints], *niyama* [things to be observed], etc. – *yama*, *niyama*, *asana* [posture], *pranayama* [breathing exercises]. Because according to my guru's teaching, these are part of your own cultural training; you should do it yourself at home. Your parents should have established it. Your school should have established it. What is yama, niyama after all? It is cultural

– what to do, what not to do. Isn't it? How to sit? How to read? It's a code of conduct. Our Hindu culture says that this should have been imbued from the cradle. So, to put it as part of the yogic tradition is not necessary. I won't say it is right or wrong – it is not necessary. Then we start in the mind. Raja yoga is pre-eminently dealing with the mind. Now, everybody meditates. On what are you meditating? Here is the difference.

My Master used to say, if you meditate on money you become a rich man. Another says, if you meditate on, say, your promotion, you do well and you get your promotion. So, meditation is a way of putting your mind on something. You are right, meditation is not concentration. See, in some of our literature we have explicitly drawn attention to the difference that concentration is the result of meditation. Now, in the Gita, Krishna says, "*Dhyanaat karma phala tyagah*" – by dhyana you are able to renounce the fruit of your actions. In what way? And then, *"Tyagaat shantir anantaram"* – by that *tyaga* [renunciation] you have endless peace, eternal peace. Now, this has to be experienced.

What is the fruit of action? *(Karma phal kya hai?)* Under the normal disciplines of yoga, or discipleship or studentship, people imagine that you immediately have to give up your house, give up your home, give up your family, run away renouncing everything. My Master says, no – attachment to the fruit of action is *karma phala*. I can earn a million rupees and not be attached to the money; whether it is there or not, it doesn't matter. I don't have to renounce. Raja Janaka is held out as one of the notable examples of this sort of disciple. He was an emperor. At the same time he was a *maharishi* [great saint]. So in our culture, this understanding of renunciation as having to give up something, physically, has hampered a lot of yogic progress, has hampered people from coming into this field. They say, "*Hum kaise chhod sakte hain?* – how can I leave my wife and my children? Are they not my responsibilities?" Very true!

Sahaj Marg emphasises, above all, duty and responsibility. And if I meditate, it is because I have a duty to myself, responsibility to myself that I must evolve to the fullest possibility that nature intends for me. It is not for acquisition of powers (or *siddhis*), or to become a yogi or to become a maharishi and earn a title. It is an evolutionary path. There is no question of getting here, there is no question of giving. We are trying to evolve into the perfect human being who can be said to be a divinised human being.

Purushottama is the concept of the Gita – *uttama purusha* [perfect human being]. He is not something else. The Divine is the perfect human aspect, manifest on earth. If the Divine is non-manifest, the purushottama is manifest. So, our goal is an evolutionary goal. Not for siddhis, not for perfection in action, as the Gita says, "*Yogah karmasu kaushalam.*" [Yoga is skill in action.] It is not perfection in that sense; it is appropriate action at the appropriate time.

So when people ask me in conferences, "How is your system different?" I say, "No different – yes different." "Is it the best?" "No." "Then, what are you offering?" We are offering an effective system. The best is not certainly always the best. This morning I was reading a joke in the newspaper about a boy who went to buy some groceries. And there were only two trays of prawns. This is fifty cents a pound and this is one dollar a pound. He says, "What's the difference?" He [the grocer] says, "Nothing. Some people like to pay fifty cents a pound; some people like to pay a dollar a pound. This is for them, this is for them."

So I am happy that you gentlemen are interested to the extent of kindly having responded to our invitation. But the proof of the pudding is always in the eating. Now, please don't misunderstand this as some sort of a proselytising effort. It is only a request that what Sahaj Marg is, you will know by meditation. So, some of you at least may be interested. We are not here to do public *prachaar* [propaganda] or advertise in the papers, print big columns of our wonderful efforts. We have not done any publicity. We don't publicise. We have no fees, we have no schools. We are doing very quiet work. In fact, when Mr.Rajagopalan came to call me, I was a bit annoyed at this idea of the press conference itself. It gives the wrong impression about Shri Ram Chandra Mission.

Our idea is to sort of, as you said, *parichay* – introduce you to what we have to offer. It is nothing new, it is nothing wonderful, but it is remarkable –"*Aashcharyavat pashyati*" [He sees with wonder] – what the Gita says. Lord Krishna had no other answer. "What is this thing that you have?" He says, "It is wonderful to look at. It's wonderful to behold, wonderful to speak about." What is wonderful? The inner nature of man that is created by yoga. Not the outside. Outside he remains the same as everybody else. Can you distinguish a yogi walking on the streets from another man, if he chooses to dress like an executive in a suit? You can't – precisely because we have not developed the inner vision to look inside. Who is this man? We don't know.

There's the famous story of Lord Krishna promising to come at midnight for a feast to the rishis. The rishis are ready with the feast, and a big jungle boar walks into their *parnashala* [hermitage], and they beat it because a pig is a dirty animal, unclean animal. And everybody feels a beat on his back. Great maharishis could not recognise the Lord's presence in that pig.

So, this is not just a matter of doing pranayama and asana, which every yogic school teaches. You understand? This is something of a different dimension. When there is a dimensional change, you cannot compare. You cannot say this is better, this is different, this is worse, that is good, this is bad; there are no dimensions. When you move from the space dimension to the time dimension, you cannot compare. How is it better than North to South? Can you ask of time, for instance? Therefore, we have to get into that dimension.

So, I humbly request all of you to agree to a sitting. Let us meditate for half an hour and see.

Q: Those who are meditating they are getting better. Are you finding any change in the society as far as the violence and crime is concerned?

PR: Well, until there are sufficient changes, it's like a crystal in a glass – you can have a concentrated solution which was not crystallised until you put a crystal in it. It is a well-known phenomenon in a chemical laboratory. You introduce a crystal, the whole thing *at once* crystallises. So, you have to bring society to a particular level of consciousness. How long it'll take, nobody can say. This is not a programmed sort of venture, like a business venture, for instance, where you plot five years (prognosis) and say, in the first year so much profit, second year so much profit. It's not possible when you are dealing with human beings who are changeable, who are intractable, who have desires of their own, who have goals of their own. It is easy to train a hundred horses. It is easy to train a whole kennel full of dogs. In three months you can have a perfect dog, but not human beings. With human beings, where is the time?

As my Master used to say, we have had so many avatars. What has happened to humanity? *Yadaa yadaa hi dharmasya glaanir bhavati...* [Whenever dharma is threatened, I (God) arrive]. Why that Lord in heaven cannot change humanity once and for all? Because, here comes the beautiful idea that a human being must, out of his freedom, out of his love, seek the truth, seek evolution. You cannot compel.

Q: Does it mean that the change which all the spiritual leaders want to bring {about} is something which is an innate part of this cause?

PR: Yes, we may never see it, but that doesn't preclude the effort. See, it is like the story of an old man who was putting a mango seed in the ground and a passing school-boy said, "Grandfather, what are you planting this for? You are not going to eat the fruit of this." He said, "Yes, my son, but somebody else will."

Q: But he knew well that it is a mango tree.

PR: I also know well that it will come. You can put that! I am hundred percent confident that there'll be a world change, global change. My Master predicted, in 1964, the fall of communism before 1990. And it happened in 1989. He said, "Communism will die in the land of its birth." You are welcome to read our literature. It is unfortunate that we want the proofs. How can there be a proof of human evolution? Which man seeing Mahatma Gandhi would have said he is a great person? Isn't it? When he started he was great; otherwise he would not have ended great. He had the guts to go the British in his half-dhoti, [to a] round-table conference. But that is not the expression of his courage. His expression of courage was, he tried to do single-handed without *any* assistance. The assistance came to him because he had the guts to start out. If he didn't start out, and he said, suppose, "I will start only when I have ten thousand supporters", he would have been Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, not Mahatma Gandhi. Great ideas are born with one man, great efforts are made by one man; the rest follows. So let us wait and see if it is in our lifetime that we shall see the fruit; otherwise I shall die with the confidence that it *shall* happen.

Q: As far as that one forecast is concerned in 1964, what are the other forecasts for the future of India and specially the world?

PR: Well, he has said that India will become the leader of the world. But he has not said when, because that depends on us. See, a school is good, but suppose you have a bad class one year, suddenly the school loses its reputation. It is a continuing process; generation after generation must contribute.

Q: But religions are now disintegrating factors.

PR: A society not divided by religions, a society where people don't worship stone and metal any more, a society where people worship God out of love and not out of materialistic desires. It's a very welcome sign as far as we are concerned. I don't know how you are going to look at it. A whole *yuga* {aeon} is ending. They are talking of the Aquarian age. They've been talking about a casteless society – where is that casteless society? It will come only when religion goes. But naturally there will be many problems. When a joint family splits up there are problems. When grownup children leave – one goes to America, one goes to Tokyo – there are problems. When children are married and go off, there are problems: the old people living at home, they don't know what to do. But problems have to be faced – faced with courage, faced with conviction. Courage is not enough; conviction is necessary. And what is that conviction? That a right work must have a right result.

Q: Don't you think the people have become more and more materialistic?

PR: Yes, of course they have become materialistic. But we saw it happening in the West. They reached the peak of material affluence. Now they are turning away. It is like on the surface of the ocean: one wave comes to the peak, subsides, then the next wave comes, subsides; it is sort of wave phenomena. We don't have to worry about it. We are only aping [the West]. Their goals of last year have become our goals of this year. But it's not going to last. If it did not last there, it's not going to last here because it is the same wave.

Q: [Inaudible]

PR: No, no, one of the fundamental teachings of my Master is that we have to fly on two wings like a bird. The material life is necessary, the spiritual life is also necessary. We must bestow equal attention to both. We cannot renounce this world and run away with our *koupinam* [loincloth] to the jungle as a saint. It is no use. At the same time, leaving the jungle and coming to the cities and becoming totally materialistic – skyscraper orientation, motor car orientation, air conditioning – is no good. As long as we are in the body, we have to live a material existence. But there you have the teaching of the Upanishad that this *shariram* [body] is like a *ratha* [chariot]. There is one who is driving it; the *panchendriyas* [five senses] are the horses. I mean it's all so beautifully pictured in our literature. So it has a purpose.

It's like a car. You take a taxi, you go from here to the station; your attachment to that taxi is over. You don't think of what happened to it – whether he had an accident on the way back; we don't think. This body is like that. We have to preserve it in as perfect a condition as possible so that this *samsara sagara* [ocean of life] we may cross. In this life we must fulfil our journey. So the material life has a purpose. It is not something to be thought of as obnoxious or dirty or ugly. Everything nature gives, nature gives for a purpose. This is exemplified, for instance, in this idea of celibacy, with which my Master does not have any sympathy. He used to say, "God did not create two sexes if one would have been enough." So there is a purpose.

Q: [Inaudible] In which country do you have more disciples?

PR: More disciples is natural in India. Well, in France we have a very big Mission. Germany, Denmark, US. But US is such a big country that in relation to the country, the number is small. Now we cannot say, like an election, that we have one per million of population. But in France and in Germany, in Denmark, it is received very well. We have an ashram in France, we have an ashram in Denmark; we have another one in the south of France, in Montpellier. We have an ashram in Atlanta in the US; we will be building a second one.

Thank you very much.

8

Adopt the Way of Evolution

As one grows older, one has to develop an increasing sense of duty towards one's own self. In nature, everything, every faculty, every capacity seems to reach a peak and then to decline. This seems to be the natural law. A fruit is raw; it becomes riper and riper and then begins to decay. A boy becomes a youth, then an adult, he becomes stronger and more capable, but a time comes when the decline commences. Fortunately, not all faculties decline at the same time or even at the same rate; some go first, some later. Again fortunately, some may decline very little, some not at all. By ordinary observation, it can be seen that the merely physical capabilities go first.

Strength of body weakens, eyesight becomes dimmer and dimmer, hearing begins to be

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24 July 1992, Ahmedabad, India

affected. But what of one's mental abilities? Do they too decline in the same manner? Observation seems to answer 'yes' and 'no'. Yes, in many cases, perhaps in a large number of cases; no, in many cases too. Observing old people who have lived well-regulated, calm, purposeful lives, one can, in fact, see that mental capacities can even increase with age. In fact, the Latin proverb says that, "A healthy mind makes for a healthy body." So to which should we give our attention – the physical life or the mental? The answer is clear for those willing to accept it. Unfortunately, the majority of human beings prefer to look carefully after the bodily existence and to neglect the mental. The body's decay is inevitable. It is subject to the laws of physics and chemistry, of growth and heredity. It is foredoomed to decay. Not so the mind, or at least not to the same extent.

What keeps the mind healthy? Lack of guilt, and negative thoughts or worries. How to achieve this? By living a life of positive... avoiding the pitfalls of existence. How to do it? By adopting the way of evolution rather than of growth and achievement, which only promote material ambitions oriented to the achievement of short-term goals. And how can that be done? By maintaining the body really as an instrument for human evolution, tailoring one's material life to this purpose *only,* thus freeing oneself from the alluring bondages of sensuality and self-satisfaction, both terms considered in their broadest meanings. This will whittle away all dross and deadwood, simultaneously purifying one's life and orienting one's purpose in the right direction – the direction of evolution. This becomes the first step in one's spiritual life. Spiritual values, capacities, truths, never decay. They are, in the sense, eternal verities. They don't change with the passage of time.

Physical and mental values are subject to the ravages of time; not so the spiritual. Wisdom dictates that the body and mind be used appropriately while they are still youthful and virile to give a proper direction to human life. For one who has grasped this truth and this opportunity, the spiritual life becomes easily established, permanently established in one's prime. If the opportunity is lost, then not only does the person open himself to the inevitable process of decay of body and mind, their steady decline makes it progressively more difficult for a true spiritual life to be adopted. A stage comes when spiritual life becomes impossible. It is at this stage that one can say that the person has to make one more attempt to evolve, and thus is brought into being the chain of births and deaths which can go on unceasingly, unless at one point the person takes things into his own hands and changes the direction of his existence from the merely temporal to the eternal. I pray that my Master may bless all brothers and sisters of the human race with this wisdom.

Thank you.

9

Science and Spirituality

Our brother's speech brings to my mind one example. You know these clowns in circuses – they make everybody laugh. I mean, most children enjoy the circus not so much for the animals and the feats as for the clowns who come in between and make us roar with laughter. And then we have tears running down our eyes also of joy, and sometimes when it goes to extremes, the laughter turns to tears. Babuji Maharaj used to say that anything which exceeds the limit can turn into its opposite. And the lives of clowns are supposed to be examples that if you want to make somebody laugh, you must yourself weep. They have very tragic lives, very difficult lives. They have to learn how to do things as if they are doing it wrong but executed perfectly in the result. That is what makes a clown, a clown.

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24 July 1992, Ahmedabad, India

What a man will do naturally perfectly, they will do most stupidly perfectly.

Often I have thought that in my Master's life... I don't know anything about Lalaji because I have no personal relationship with him, he was not alive – or rather he was there till I was five years old. But I have been with my Master for many years and it was a fascination to see this meeting of opposites in him. That is why one of our books published in Canada is titled *Tears and Laughter*, because the two go together. There is laughter in tears and there are tears in laughter. In Babuji's life there was this absolute, I don't know whether to call it a coincidence or correspondence of the two apparent extremes: an uneducated man or a very meagrely educated man, wise beyond wisdom itself; a physically weak man endowed with the strength exceeding the strength of this universe; a materially poor man blessed with the riches undreamt of even by the creator of riches. Kubera [god of wealth] could very well go to him to borrow.

I take the name of Kubera because we have a tradition in South India, in this temple of Balaji, that Lord Venkateshwara borrowed money from Kubera when he had an affair with the lady down the hill, and he borrowed so much that even today he is still paying the interest on that. Now imagine Lord Venkateshwara borrowing money from Kubera. It should be the other way around, isn't it? Kubera's capital should be limited. But we have this funny thing that Lord Venkateshwara, the Lord of the seven hills, supposed to be an avatara of Lord Vishnu, borrowing from a money lender.

But here is my Master, from whom everybody had to borrow. Therefore he said, "You see that I have *that* with me, which the greatest emperors should have sought, because they had it not. Gods themselves have to seek it." Now don't think this is a blasphemy because in our Shastras, in the Gita, it is very clearly said that all these *trimurtis* [Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva] themselves had to come down to this *bhuloka* [earth] (what is called a *karma bhumi* [land of karma]) and start their yatra once again from here towards the spiritual goal on which we too are embarked. If you look at it in that way, we are ahead of the *trimurtis*. They are yet to come down because they are stuck in their cosmic functions – super cosmic functionaries of nature, as Babuji has said in *Reality at Dawn*. And there was the man, my Master, who claimed with very substantial truth, that he sent Rama and Krishna to this world for its *uddhaar* – for its development, for its liberation, for its release. So we think gods make us. But my Master was a god-maker. Now what can a god-maker be?

It's a funny thing that we do not know, we have often felt this confusion, how was God created. You know, this is very much like the question whether the chicken came first or the egg came first. We can go on thinking: chicken, egg, chicken, egg, like that you see, and it is an infinite process – tree or seed, God or Master. This is something on which I would like you all to think because there is no answer as such. This is not a textbook where you can say two plus two is equal to four, four minus three is equal to one. We are not here dealing with facts of either science or art or philosophy. We are here dealing in an immutable, transcendental region, a dimension, if you would like to call it that, a faith. Faith, says my Master, created the gods themselves. What is this faith based on? There is no answer because if faith is based on something, it ceases to be faith.

See, normally we understand that my spiritual life is going well, I passed my examinations, I got a wonderful job, I was able to marry the girl that I wished to marry, I have three delightful children, none of them are sick, my coffers are getting fuller and fuller, and every time when I pray, it is answered. Faith is easy under such circumstances and you can say, "What a Master I have! Every prayer I have ever made has been answered. Look at my life for the past ten years, twelve years, from the culmination of my educational process to my present situation as a father of three children, an executive with a fantastic salary. What more can I ask for?" At that stage comes a *thok* [tap] on the head. It is as if Master is reminding me that there can come a time when things will change or, I would say, when things *must* change.

You cannot have a circle formed out of a point which is moving in a straight line. It will only go eternally in a straight line. To form a circle, that moving point must change every moment in time, and the circle is complete. It is said in mathematics that a circle is an aspect of infinity because it can go on infinitely round and round without ever reaching an end – that is one definition of infinity, when our lives become similarly closed. Now our lives are open (open in the sense, that we are open to every vagary of desire, wish, want). They are at us like 'the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune', as Shakespeare said, aimed at us from everywhere. You know, the first thing that people in the bazaar do when there is trouble is to pull down their shutters.

Openness must go to result in closedness. That is a physical closing; that is a defensive closing.

That is a closing of an opening which could be our betrayal through which an enemy or a thief could enter. How do we close our lives? Because you know we are always talking of opening of the heart. And I know, especially in some countries in the West, this business of opening the heart has resulted in some very real problems [of] inter-human relationships. The moment you talk of an open heart, people think it means free love – loving everybody that I used to love, all at the same time. That is not the meaning of an open heart. It has to be open to certain things, closed to the rest. So how can I have an open heart which is open to something and closed to everything? How can I have a memory from which I can selectively retrieve what I wish to remember and forget everything else? How can I choose one goal amongst so many? Here comes the most brilliant success, or the most brilliant reason for the success of my Master's yoga, which is also for our success.

Let us be foolish, let His wisdom guide us. I was misquoted recently as saying that we should have rich friends – or I was rather partially quoted. Babuji Maharaj has said that it is better to have rich friends than to be rich yourself. Because if you are rich yourself, you have all the problems of the rich man – a big house, a watchman to guard it, telephone bills to pay, maintenance charges to meet, ever increasing needs, problems in taxation, problems in protection, problems in maintaining that rate of income or perhaps, if possible, to increase it. Whereas if you are the friend of a rich man, you can live in his house and be happy – no problems; all the problems he takes. You have the pleasure of living under the protection of a rich man, under his benevolent care, under his, shall we say, all embracing love. You are no different from the rich man when you are in his house. But if you are the rich man, you have all the problems which are created by yourself.

So wisdom says, "O Master, I am really stupid, however much education I may have had." What is an education? A PhD in Physics, a PhD in zoology, what does it teach you? It teaches you some facts about a scientific subject. Does it give you the ability to guide your life in the right direction? I refuse to believe that it does, because the examples of PhDs going haywire are too many before me. They are obsessed with their particular faculty or particular subject or particular specialisation. They go deeper and deeper into that, more and more specialisation, starting off with a mango tree, ending up with a mango trunk, then going on to a mango branch, then a mango leaf, then into the chlorophyll of that leaf. They are forgetting the good and going down into the tree, into the deeper levels of the tree; they are getting lost.

Spirituality says, go the opposite way. Why don't we see everything? Look at what zoology and botany have to teach in common, and chemistry in common, physics in common. Achieve a grand synthesis of everything. How can we achieve this grand synthesis? By forgetting knowledge and going into wisdom, and then opening up yourself in a particular way, to receive intuitively the knowledge of this universe. No more do we have to read books; no more does knowledge come from books. After all, we must remember all the books in the world were written by people who got knowledge without reading.

A kite and a key – electricity; a key and a piece of rock with an electric plate below it, exposed – radium. They were not scientists. They were accidental discoveries. Every discovery is accidental. But in spirituality, there is no such thing as an accidental discovery. It is a revealed knowledge, it is a revelation that we receive when we give up our own foolishness, make our minds blank like slates and let Him write upon it, whatever He thinks is necessary for us for the next moment. There is no fixity in knowledge.

This is one of the truths that we must accept. Scientific knowledge, secular knowledge, your knowledge of universities is contained in books, and they are sealed with the destiny of completion. That is why in science you have only hypothesis. Nothing is proved, because you go on with the hypothesis as long as it works. When it stops working, you abandon that hypothesis.

Hypothesis is hypothetical – assumed knowledge. Assuming that if this knowledge were true, such-and-such would be the result. If the scientist is lucky, many of his results would agree with that hypothesis, and then it tends to harden into a theory. But suddenly comes one sling shot from destiny to knock him back into his senses, and he gets outrageously wrong results and the theory is shattered, the hypothesis shattered, and they start all over again. I am quoting (almost quoting) the words of a very prominent, eminent scientist, who has spoken about scientific knowledge in just these terms, published just a few months ago; it's not my own. It shows what a scientist thinks of scientific knowledge.

So knowledge as contained in books is like wealth contained in gold and silver – destructible, changeable, not reliable. Then, if the knowledge of the books and universities is not reliable because they can change, on which knowledge should I rely for my destiny to be achieved in life? There is only one answer: His knowledge. Because His knowledge is an ever changing knowledge; there is no fixity to his knowledge. People have often said that the Master says something today and he controverts it tomorrow. Why not? If Einstein had the privilege and the right to drastically change theories, opposing them sometimes, opposing a past theory of thirty years ago with a present theory which is totally in opposition to the past theory, how can such a right be denied to a Master, who sees things as they are?

The scientist only sees things as they appear to be. It is a well-known fact of science – it doesn't need to be elaborated upon. We see things as they appear to be. He sees things as they are. Therefore his knowledge is of things as they are – direct perception *(pratyaksha anubhava)* – how can it be different? That is what we want in any situation. Because we are tending to be swayed by things as they appear to us, forgetting that there is a reality behind which we are not able to penetrate through, precisely because we have imposed upon our own eyes the veil of a temporary acceptance of the truth as it is, as it appears to be. He had not only the patience but the courage to say, "Okay, this is a superficial truth. What is behind it? Veil one – what is behind it? Veil two – what is behind it?"

You know, in all these occult mysteries, there is always a story of seven veils hiding the face of truth. We have seven days in a week. There are seven veils hiding the face of truth, and if you stop with veil one and say, "Yes, this is the reality", we have stopped at one stage. We have had no more than another partial vision of reality. So, the seeker must continue to seek. He cannot rest and say, "My search is over." This is what Babuji meant when he said, "Contentment is an enemy of spiritual progress." The moment you say, "I am there; I have achieved", it is finished. You have only an easy chair and, subsequently, perhaps a nice cremation, no more than that.

So the wisdom [comes] when we perceive that we do not have the ability to lift veil after veil, to remove veil after veil, because the outermost is fascinating. It is a fascination of knowledge which attracts scientists and research workers, but it is a wrong fascination: the fascination of an atom, the fascination of its nucleus, the fascination of the particles in it, on and on until they come to something where there is nothing, and now they do not know what to be fascinated with. Some of them go crazy, some of them take to drugs, drink, etc. But at that stage, they should come back to their wisdom and say, "The reality is, there is nothing. All that appears to me in this universe, in this manifest, grand, beautiful, superb universe is nothing." They have the courage to penetrate, but have not the courage to face the result of that penetration. All the myths of this world, whether Greek or Roman or Indian, they speak of the awful face of the truth, of reality.

Babuji Maharaj has said that reality is a barren desert; there is nothing there – nothing to see, nothing to perceive, nothing to laugh at, nothing to weep about, nothing to be attracted by, nothing to be repelled by. You all know the story that when Babuji had reached that condition and Lalaji congratulated him and said, "Now you are there", and Babuji said, "Is it for this that I have laboured so much? And you too have laboured?" Lalaji said, "If that is all the value that you put upon this condition, I will take it away from you." Then Babuji said, "Please do not." Lalaji said, "Why?" He said, "Because without this, I cannot live."

So, that ultimate condition of nothingness is life. It is nothing more, nothing less than life itself. Because when a man like Babuji Maharaj says that without this condition, I cannot live, it only means that it is life itself, it is my existence. What I am conscious of at that stage is the consciousness of nothingness. That is the true consciousness – *sat* [existence], *chit* [consciousness], and that bliss-less state where there is no possibility of bliss, therefore there is no possibility of its opposite of anguish, is the true *anandam* [bliss] where there is no anandam. *Sat-chit-anandam* achieves a new significance: non-existent existence, nothing-to-be-conscious-of consciousness, no-anguish, no-bliss state of bliss, which is *life*.

When you come to this truth, then you understand that it is not life which seeks joy and happiness, it is the coverings which seek joy and happiness. It is the body, it is the mind, it is the senses, the ego. The ego seeks power, the senses seek gratification, the body seeks pleasure, and if these tendencies are not removed in this existence, deep enough to give us at least a consciousness or an awareness or an understanding of the truth that these are bars to our progress, then we have to come again and again.

So, *punarjanma* [rebirth] is nothing but our own creation too. I have not learnt, so I come back. I have to come back until I learn. Learn what? Not a lesson, not punishment, not reward, but it is [like] a scientist who closes up his laboratory for the day, goes home to sleep and comes back the next morning to continue his research. So, in this soul's awakening under the merciful, compassionate and all loving touch of a divine Master, the best course is to forget. My knowledge and my stupidity – both are equally useless to me. Stupidity, everybody understands, is useless; knowledge, people are refusing to accept as useless. But when we understand the limited nature of our limited knowledge, as the scriptures say, "What you have learnt is but the amount that you can grasp in one fist, and what you have not learnt is like the Himalayas", and on this little bit of knowledge and this little bit of acquired facts, you are proud, you are haughty, you are intemperate, you judge others and say, "You are fools and stupid. I am wise." What a parody of wisdom! How we should pity such people! Similarly, the man of wealth, the man of power, the man of position, the man of substance – they are all basing their facts and their faith upon what they possess, thinking that what they possess is a security against non-possession.

We are afraid of losing our money precisely because we are afraid of being without money. We look upon mad people with fear precisely because we don't want to be mad. We are afraid of ugly people, diseased people, precisely because we see in them the reflection of what we would be, were we to be treated by destiny in that way.

So, it is fear which really rules possessiveness. It is fear which makes us hold to our strength, to our riches, to our knowledge, to our possessions. When you are free of that fear, everything goes. 'Everything' means literally everything. There is now no fear of death – because what is death? It is but the throwing off, as the Upanishad says, of the veils that are surrounding your immaculate existence inside, releasing it into the infinite bliss, infinite wisdom of the universe. So it is only a fool who is afraid of death.

Therefore, to achieve this true discipleship, we should not be afraid of weakness and hold on to strength, but give up both. We have to give up the fear of weakness and the courage arising out of strength; we have to give up the fear of poverty and the strength arising out of riches; we have to give up the fear of stupidity together with the strength of wisdom of such facts or knowledge that we possess – both have to go. You cannot transcend one without transcending the other.

We, in our weakness, in our suspicion of the future (what it will have for us), we hold on to what we think is positive and give up the negative. Now it is a fact of existence itself that the positive and negative go hand in hand. Where there is wisdom there must be foolishness; where there is wealth there must be poverty; where there is beauty there must be ugliness; where there is strength there must be weakness. Therefore we find Babuji Maharaj walking on the tight rope as it were, the razor's edge of nothingness. And how could a man walk on a razor's edge? Because if I stepped on it, it would cut through my feet. He had become so light that his body had no weight. Having a body, it was as if he had no body; having a mind, it was as if he had no mind; having a home, it was as if he had no home; having everything, it was as if he had nothing.

Therefore in the life of such a Special Personality, as the one he had been blessed with (Babuji Maharaj), we see the dramatic juxtaposition of opposites: rich at one moment, poor at the next, something in between; healthy at one moment, sick at the next, something in between. It was a fascination to observe his life, because you never knew what he was going to be the next moment. He would be groaning with pain; suddenly Sarandji, let us say, would come with his translation of Babuji's diaries. He would sit up and say, "*Achcha Sarnad, tum aagaye.* [So, Sarnad, you have come.] Let us work." And the pain would leave miraculously. But if there was a lapse of a moment in that work, he would just say, "Aah." But nothing on his face, no expression on his face of pain or suffering, but the body would groan. So, there we were able to see a person who was pain personified, without signs of pain on his face. The body did its play. It acted out its part. It groaned, it twisted, it turned, it aged, finally disappeared. But 'he' that was in it, did he suffer from it? Did he enjoy it? Well, it is for you to think over these things. When we say, "Babuji suffered", did he in his inner spiritual self suffer?

I was made to ask this question after seeing Menaka leaving Shakuntala, when Indra called her back to Indraloka. Vishwamitra, of course, walked out as most fathers do. He said, "This is your baby; hold it", and he left for his *tapasya* [penance] – male arrogance, male craving for realisation after his fall. But for Menaka to just go away in response to the call of Indra, leaving behind her baby; she, the mother – no choice. So, that is the call of the divine flute, as they say about Krishna. When the flute was played by him, nobody had a choice; they ran. Why did they run? It would be foolish to call it love, it would be foolish to call it sensual, it would be foolish to call it anything. It was obedience to the call which could not be disobeyed. Nobody knows the reason. If you ask any individual gopi, "Don't you love your husband and children that you are leaving the pot boiling on the fire and running away like a crazy woman?" She had no answer. Such situations cannot be answered.

When the call of the Divine comes and we obey it, there is no reason behind it. It is as if it is willed to happen like that. Willed by whom? Can you say it is the will of the Master pulling the abhyasi towards himself? I would not say that is absolutely true, because spiritual law forbids compulsion. Nevertheless there is an aspect of a pull from the Master. He makes a thought, and now there is again this miracle that he is no more the doer there. He can say, "I don't know what happened. He came." "How did he come?" "Lalaji's grace." So the thought of the Master becomes his Master's grace in a very real, in a very spiritually truthful sense that when the Master thinks, his Master's grace is attached to that thought. Therefore you can say, "*Thathaastu*" [so be it], and it happens.

Why do blessings of the Master work, and not blessings of everybody else? I used to ask this question of all the people who have been seeing the Mahabharata serial. They were blessing like crazy. Every fool who walked into Bhishma's hall was blessed. What happened? The only person who refuses to bless is, strangely enough, the mother of Duryodhana. She said, "Sorry, this blessing I cannot give you because it is not yours.

You have no right to victory." She was the real mother. She was able to deny her son, her first born, and all his ninety-nine brothers victory which would have made them live, as against the sentence of death which she bestowed upon them by denying her blessings. Because had she blessed, it must have worked. Everybody else was blessing like crazy, and nothing worked. Even the Lord of the sun, his son was dead – Suryaputra [son of the sun god] Karna. What happened to him? So, that I am a Brahmin is no guarantee or insurance that I will go to heaven; that my father and mother were *mlecchas* [outcastes] is no bar either. Because if a Suryaputra can be killed, what is a Brahmin's son worth?

So birth has no meaning, lineage has no meaning (*gotra* [lineage] has no meaning). This is exemplified again and again in our Puranas: a boy who doesn't know his father is accepted by a guru because he is able to tell the truth and say, "My mother told me that she does not know who my father is", and the guru says, "You are a Brahmin because Brahmin speaks the truth. You have spoken the truth, therefore you are a Brahmin." Nowadays, Brahmins don't speak the truth. But the law says that one who lives like a Brahmin is a Brahmin, not one who is born as a Brahmin. We have Kshatriyas today who don't know how to even use a matchstick, leave alone a sword. I mean, this hall must be half full of them – the Rajputs. Where is their bravery? Where is their courage?

So when nothing is useful to me, not my birth, not my caste, not my community, not my colour, not my sex, nothing is useful to me, then what is useful to me is what is left – my inner craving, my search, the anguished heart which says, "I must reach my goal." That is what is going to lead me to my goal. Therefore Babuji said, "Craving is essential." When that craving is there, cooperation is automatic. When we only come with hopes and expectations for material welfare, for a little happy time, there is no craving. Therefore there is no cooperation.

If you suddenly get the smell of *samosa* from the cafeteria, ten percent of this hall will walk out – *taaza* [fresh] samosa. I used to see this happening in Shahjahanpur. Babuji would say, "Nine o'clock, *puja karaayenge hum."* [We will have satsangh at nine o'clock.] Eight-thirty, some people would leave in a hurry to go to the main road to Ram Lal's shop for some *taaza jalebi* [freshly made sweets] and then come back. Often they came back too late for the sitting because Babuji, with his own infinite sense of, shall we say, a mischievous soul, would have finished the sitting before they came. "Well, you wanted jalebi, take it. When you want the sitting, come and stay till it is over."

So we have to wait; even for a sitting you have to wait. Not something programmed that, "At 6.30 we will sit, and at 6.35 he is not there, let us walk out because the old fellow is useless. He has no sense of time. We are a modern civilisation, where time is money." All these arguments we hear. If you are going to be like that, you will lose. How long to wait? Well, faith says, infinitely. There is no limit to the waiting that one imposes upon oneself as an act of faith. Faith and the ability to wait are, to my mind, synonymous. Only one who can wait has faith. A faithless fellow cannot wait.

So one who is able to wait infinitely for the guru's grace is the man of infinite faith, and he need not wait infinitely; to him the blessing comes instantaneously. This is the aspect of invertendo, which is most enchanting, that when you say, "I can wait eternally, my Master", he says, "Not necessary. Since you *can* wait, you need not wait."

So in spirituality, the abilities are unmanifest abilities – we must have them, but never use them. The ability to wait lies inside, hidden like a coiled spring; upon it is my faith.

On top of that, as the *shikhara* [pinnacle] is my love for the Master, because it is love that makes us faithful. It is love which says he cannot deny. When there is love between us, there is no more denial too. Because what is his is yours. If you are a son of your father, you don't have to lay claim to his wealth; it is automatically yours. The law permits it; the court awards it – as Portia would have said. We don't have to seek, we don't have to find.

So this ability to wait because of one's faith, which is there because of one's love, if it is total, faith is total, ability to wait is infinite. Therefore one's rewards are total, instantaneous. It is for such blessings that you should pray to our almighty divine Master, and I hope and pray that he will make it so.

Thank you.

10

Create Your Future

Yesterday I said {that} I will not speak again, but I am compelled to make some clarifications. Some people said {that} yesterday's talk was very hard, strong, but I think that was because you all misunderstood what I was trying to say. My purpose in speaking all these four days... (I never speak so much: this is my fifth talk in four days!) Nowadays I try not to speak, but you know, here we have people who have been many years in Sahaj Marg and who are only thinking of the past. We have many new entrants who don't know whether to think of the past or the future, but are in the present. You have me, quite an old man, very tired, often disappointed, thinking of the future with fear, with sadness. So, the combination of these three forces makes me speak. Because human beings have a tendency

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to think of the future as something separate from themselves. They think there is a personal future and there is a general future. Now this is a big mistake.

"Future will take care of itself," we say. How will it take care of itself? Then we go to the *jyotish* [astrologer] and ask, "What is *my* future?" as if my future can be different from the general future of this world. Then we go to the guru, in total contradiction to the previous two beliefs, and say, "Please help me to create my future, you help me in it." So we believe that my personal future is distinct from the general future; we believe that the future is already made when we go to the astrologer and ask him to predict; we deny that, when we go to a guru or a temple and say, "I want to change my future" – three different beliefs, incompatible with each other.

Now the truth of the matter is that the future is made up by all of us. There is no fixed future. When we say the future is *there*, we are thinking in some way as if the future already exists. I deny this possibility. It is like when you unroll a carpet: as you unroll, the future of the carpet comes into existence; if I don't unroll, there is no carpet, no future. So in that sense, we must all be cooperating in this magnificent effort to create the future. It is not the future of one person that we are talking about. Like the destiny of every individual thread in the carpet is the destiny of the carpet itself. If the carpet is sold, every thread in it is sold, every colour in it is sold, every minute of labour that has gone into the creation of that carpet is sold. You cannot sell a carpet without selling the threads that make up the carpet. When I buy this dhoti or sari (as they would say), every thread in it is sold to me not individually, but collectively as a dhoti. Now if each thread in this dhoti thinks, "I have an independent destiny", it is making a mistake. When this dhoti is washed, every thread in it will soak in water; when it is ironed, every thread in it will feel the heat of the iron; when it is dried, every thread in it will be dried. In that sense, our future is very much the future of this world.

If you think you are going to have a separate destiny other than the destiny of this world, of which you are citizens, [it is the] first mistake we commit. "No, no, I will survive, whatever may happen to this world" – only a fool can say. People often ask me, "What will happen if there is a war? Will the *punyaatma* [noble soul] be saved?" Now I cannot conceive of a punyaatma being saved selectively. If a bomb falls on Calcutta, *Ishwar na kare* [God forbid], atomic bomb, Calcutta will go off with all its one crore population.

By accident a *thelawala* [handcart puller] may survive, a prostitute may survive, a beggar may survive – by accident; it is not [that] then they are punyaatmas. By accident a multimillionaire may also survive, not because again he is a punyaatama, but by accident. So, such survivals are by accident; everybody will surely die. Now all that will happen to the punyaatma as opposed to the *paapaatma* [sinful soul] is that if they have qualified [for] liberation, they will be liberated. The others will go in one way, the liberated souls will go in another way; die to this world, they all will.

So many people come to us thinking that if there is a holocaust, those who are in Sahaj Marg will be somehow miraculously saved. Their souls will be saved, [but] they [their bodies] will not be saved; it is not possible. So if you want to survive on earth in the physical way, make it impossible for wars to happen. How to make impossible, such wars? By recognising the fact that nature has several ways of bringing about destruction: floods, storms, tidal waves, earthquakes, and disasters caused by human beings themselves – five ways: nature's ways and human ways. And when it wants to destroy, it will destroy in one of these ways. And when will it destroy? When it sees no hope of the human beings bringing about change in the future. It will say, "This is finished, they can no longer work to nature's purpose. Let me finish them and bring another generation." So, destruction nature does; construction we do, every human being. This is the difference.

Nature does not construct. We construct, we build. We build our today, we build our tomorrow, we build the future. Destruction nature does, when it sees we don't do our work properly – like when you have a servant who is not working properly, you remove the servant and bring another servant; car is useless, you sell the car and buy another car; business is useless, you sell the business and start another business.

So destruction is not to be looked upon as punishment. Destruction is nature's way of saying, "You are useless, let me change the whole scene; let me bring about a new generation of mankind. They will survive to make the future what it should be." So we have a part to play in this. And why do we have a part to play in this? Why is it important for you to recognise this part? Because the future is your future too. Like every young girl's future is marriage. Now marriage is a general future, but will this individual girl be married? [It] depends on her family, depends on her, depends on the boy who was going to marry her. Happiness is the future of all mankind, but will any individual be happy? If he goes the way nature wants him to go, surely he will be happy; if not, he cannot be happy. Health is the future of mankind. Will all of us be healthy? Yes, if you go the way of nature; if you go against, you are going to be sick.

So all the negative things we bring about ourselves by disobeying nature's command, nature's laws, most importantly, nature's purpose. Otherwise nature is there as a healthy, happy, wise, benevolent future. We don't have to create futures in that sense that I have to work for happiness, or I have to work for pleasure, or I have to work for health. If I avoid going against nature, health is my birthright, happiness is my birthright, light is my birthright. But if I go and shut myself up in a room and close all the windows and doors, I am in darkness, not because the sun is not shining but because I have isolated myself out of contact with nature. So there is no punishment in nature, please understand that. Nature does not punish; nature destroys, nature recreates a new scenario, a new stock of raw material, which will further its purpose of evolution.

So we should not be afraid of punishment. We should not be good because we are afraid of punishment – that is a weak way of being good

– a *buzdili* [act of cowardice]. A coward is good only because he is afraid of being punished. A real brave man is one who cannot be anything but brave, not because he will get a medal or because he wants society to praise him. So we have to determine to go the way of nature, knowing that if I support nature in her cause, in her purpose, nature will support me in everything I do; such a person nature cannot oppose.

I remember, Babuji once said that nature supports us in anything we do. You do wrong, nature supports you. Because it is like the engine in a car (I've spoken about this so many times) – you put it in forward gear, the engine moves you forward; you put it in reverse gear, the engine moves you backwards. It is not the engine's fault. Now you may ask, "Why does nature support me like that?" Because nature is benevolent, nature is divine. God Himself supports everything that we do. He says, "You want to go this way, my strength is in you; you want to go in that way, my strength is in you."

Remember Krishna giving himself to Arjuna, and all his powers and armies to Duryodhana. He was not unfair, because being the Lord, he is bound to support anything, anywhere, at any time – you want to gamble, go ahead, gamble; you want to drink yourself to death, go ahead.

Why? Because God says, "I have given you individual liberty, I have given you freedom, I have given you the intelligence, I have given you the willpower. Using these you must work in your favour, which is nature's purpose."If you don't use your intelligence in the right way, if you cannot use your willpower, of what use are you to anybody else? Therefore set aside. This man or this woman is useless. He or she will spoil the purpose of nature. Her individual good cannot be sacrificed to the good of a whole world or a whole universe. Therefore selfishness is bad. Selfishness means, "I work for myself alone." Working for the general purpose means, "By working for everybody, I still work for myself." If everybody is happy, I will be happy. If everybody is miserable, how can I alone be happy? It's not possible, isn't it?

So, by working for the general good, by working to promote nature's purpose of progress, eternal progress towards that ultimate goal, we automatically work for ourselves. Like when you walk with me in the morning, you also walk for yourself. Your walking is going to help you, not me. But because you walk with me, you are walking. Otherwise you would be asleep with a *rajai* [quilt] over your head, lazy, useless, wasting your morning hours. Now, why do I take the trouble of taking fifteen useless people along with me every morning on my walks? To make them useful. Useful to whom? To themselves. They create the habit of getting up early, they create the habit of walking, they will not lose that habit after I go, I hope. They will therefore be happy, contented, useful, healthy to themselves and, in that way, my walking contributes to general purpose. You can even say I walk so that you may all walk. Because, if I don't walk, none of you {would} go for a walk.

So this is the problem of one who has to be an example. He has to do things which he need not do, so that others may do them. He must tell the truth, though for him there is no difference between the truth and the lie. Why must he tell the truth? Because others may tell the truth. He must eat wisely, though for him there is no wisdom in anything. Why? Because others must be taught to eat wisely.

So this is the responsibility of one who becomes an example to society, one whom others must follow, that his actions, his words and the goal that he is reaching for will be accepted and absorbed by those who are with him. And in this interplay, love plays a very big part because you will not follow one whom you cannot love, whom you do not love, whom you will not love.

You will say, "*Theek hai, aap ho aayiye. Main chai banake rakhti hoon ghar mein.*" [All right, you go and come. I shall keep tea ready for you at home.] Will you do it? So in this way, this business of love becomes important, that wherever you go, I will follow like a dog. It does not ask its master, "Where are you going?" It is happy that its master is going on a walk so that it may follow. It jumps out, it goes before him, looks back and barks, makes him follow. And it's a play between the two – who is ahead and who is behind; it's a play.

We are always together, there is no ahead, there is no behind, provided you stay together. So for this staying together, there must be this bond created that I follow him, because between me and him there is a special bond. Now I cannot let him go, I cannot let him go alone, not because he is going to fall and break his head (who cares about that?) but because I cannot be happy without him. So, "Whither thou goest, I will go", as it says in the Bible. Not that, "You must go where I want to go. Then I will come with you. Are you going to Taj Grand or Dalhousie Square for dinner? Then I will come with you. You are going for meditation? *Nahin, nahin, aap ho aayiye, main kal jaoongi.*" [No, no, you go and come, I will go tomorrow.] That is not love.

It must be like the love of Sita for Rama – "Going to the jungle? I will come." Rama never planned; he was thinking of going alone. First Lakshmana said, "Nonsense, how can you go without me?" He accepted. But when Sita said, "I am your *dharmapatni* [dutiful wife]. Who are you to stop me? It is my right. I am half of you." So she asked Rama, "How can you leave half of yourself behind? Are you trying to shame me? Can I, after marriage, remain at home? Fie on thee" – to use the language of Shakespeare – "Fie on thee," she says, "I come." He could not say anything, poor fellow. Rama the great, but he could not stop his wife from following, because she is his wife; he could not stop Lakshmana from following because Lakshmana is not only a brother, but a devotee. So, where there is love, there is no need for *shiksha* [instruction].

Babuji Maharaj has said, sadhana. I asked him, "Is it very important?" He said, "Yes – discipline. I say you should do it, you should do it." Constant remembrance – to create love. Sadhana creates constant remembrance, creates love. "After love, what?" He said, "Now wait for the beloved." When this bondage of love has been created, if you do not go to him, he will come to you. How can the two be separate? It is not the question of who is weaker and who is stronger – there is *tadap* [yearning] on both sides. One must go to the other. Which one? Circumstances determine. Sometimes he goes to his beloved, sometimes she goes to her lover; always they meet, maybe in the jungle, maybe in the palace, maybe on the road, maybe in the office. That meeting is important. What for? Because through that meeting of the lover and the beloved comes the possibility of the third thing, which Babuji calls creation. Now I am not talking in human terms of creation. Of course for human creation too, the lover and the beloved must join in union, but that is merely physical.

Here a third thing is created. What is that third thing? The possibility of a future. Like when you rub a stone and a piece of flint, what is brought out is fire, not a *bachcha* [baby] flint or a bachcha stone but fire, and with that fire you can cook, you can destroy, you can do anything. Here there is no destruction. As I showed you earlier, nature does not destroy; nature changes. What it cannot use, it changes, it removes. Like when this house will be destroyed to make a new Gujarati Samaj, all this will become rubble. So we should not become rubble for nature, to be carted away and thrown into some swamp to fill it. I hope you have better opinion of yourselves than mere fillings for swamps. We are to stand proudly on earth as the torch-bearers of a civilisation that is yet to be.

We will be torch-bearers only if we have faith in that torch that even though it is light now and I hold the torch, yet soon it will be dark, and this will be necessary. That faith will make us hold aloft this torch and walk when everybody else perhaps laughs at us, perhaps insults us, perhaps denies the whole thing. There are always people who deny, who heckle, who destroy – we have to be prepared for that. When will you be prepared for it? When you know that even the man who scoffs and laughs today, when it becomes dark, will come running to you and say, "Thank you for holding this light. I thought you were a damn fool, but now, without you, I would be in the darkness too."

So we are preparing to bring into the future the light that is shone and is shining. We are very fond of these Olympic lights, taking them from a flame in Olympus in Greece and running with it all over the world. Nowadays that is also gas. How much prouder we should be, that here we are holding up a lamp which nobody can see, a lamp which will burn eternally, provided there is somebody to hold it aloft, and which will light the lamps of the future, which will create the destinies of the future, which will create the super human races of the future, and the divine race of the future even beyond that?

So, we are to be fathers and mothers of future generations of human beings whom we shall never see. Therefore we need to have to have faith. "Oh, but I will never see my child." So what? You know there is a child, isn't it? Do you have to see a child to know you are going to have a child? Therefore, faith in the future which I am not going to see.

It is like that story of a sixty-year-old man who was planting a mango seed, and a young fellow came and said, "Grandfather, what are you doing?" He said, "I am planting a mango seed." He said, "But you will be dead long before it grows." He said, "Yes, my son, but somebody will eat the fruit." So here is the selflessness of Sahaj Marg, of the spiritual worker, of the spiritual devotee, of the spiritual lover, that we are creating fruit which we shall never eat. In that lies the selflessness of our service. One who creates for his own consumption is a selfish blighter. He is creating for himself, he will suffer with it; he will get his own indigestion and whatnot. But when you put your love into it and create something which you know *must* be, which cannot escape being, because you have put your whole heart and your love into it, and which your love tells you will be what it shall be because you have decided it shall be so, that is the courage, that is the faith of Divinity itself.

We say we have faith in the future. What faith have you in the future when you are running around to temples and astrologers and fools? You are denying your faith every time you ask for a weather forecast before boarding a plane, when you look at the sky [to see] whether there are clouds before going into a plane. Well, in the slightest disturbance somewhere, you cancel your flight and stay at home. Are these actions of faith? We are not suggesting that you should be stupid and foolhardy, but when it is *necessary* to go for the purpose of life, we *have* to go; there can be no stopping. If you stop, you are left behind. So this is what I was trying to convey yesterday, not something to frighten you or shake you, something which you should think was harsh. It was certainly not harsh. I thought people would understand something I said yesterday and I would not have to elaborate, but it seems I have to elaborate.

So remember three things: that the future is a fluid thing – there is no fixity in the future. It is not a fixed, pre-determined future. It is nonsense to think of the future like that. If we don't change, the future is fixed. I mean like rice will remain rice in a bag, so long as you don't cook it; money in a bank will remain money in a bank, so long as you don't use it; a fool will remain a fool, so long as he doesn't become wise. In that sense the future is always fixed. Our inability to change gives us a future which is pre-determined. Our willingness and ability to change makes us capable of creating a future at *our* will – it is now my future.

So, 'my future' – I have a right to say only when I create my future. Otherwise it is *the* future that is fixed. *The* future is always fixed; *my* future even God cannot fix because I have the sole right to fix my destiny, my future, because the way is there: the way of yoga, the way of the Master, meditation, cleaning, constant remembrance, love for the Master, surrender to the Master, *laya* [union] with the Master. When you are able to achieve that final stage of laya with the Master, his future becomes my future. So from *the* future – to *my* future – to *his* future is the path of Sahaj Marg. So I hope I have made myself clear.

Thank you for your patience.

11

Meditation – A Natural Process

In our Hindu philosophy (Sanatana Dharma, as we call it), especially in the Vaishnava philosophy, there is this thought that only the Lord is *purusha* [male]; all creation is female. *Ek hi purush hain, voh paramaatma hain. Aur baaki sab insaan, chaahe bhautik roop mein voh mard ho ya aurat ho, sab aurat hain* [There is only one male, and that is the Lord; the rest, whether man or woman in the material form, are all females] for spiritual life. There is a story that when Meera went to Mathura or Brindavan, I don't remember, she wanted to meet a famous saint of those times. She sent him a note that, "I have come. I would like to pay my respects to you." He wrote back and said, "I do not see ladies. I have taken a vow not to look on the face of a woman." She sent back a reply, "I thought that in Brindavan and

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5 August 92, New Delhi, India

Mathura the Lord is the only purusha." Then he came out and begged her forgiveness.

Why I say this [is] because what Jackie said about giving birth, the beauty of a child being born, it struck a chord in my mind that a woman gives birth to a child, but every human being *must* adopt this attitude that spiritually he is a mother and, as a mother, he must give birth to his own soul. Awakening of the soul means allowing that which is inside me, bound up by samskaras, locked up like in a *tijori* [locker], open it and let it flow and expand. This is one reason why we must not think of ourselves as male and female, but all of us as capable of evolving in the real sense, which is to give birth to our true Self – allow it to be born from us. This is the idea of the *dvijanma* [twice born]: rebirth – one birth is the physical birth from the mother; the spiritual birth is the birth from the lower self, releasing the higher Self into the eternity into which it really belongs. Now our real Self, the higher Self, is locked up. It is like cash going in one of these bank chests from bank to bank, locked up. Our economists tell us, "Release your cash. Let it work for you; let it work for the nation." What about this [the heart] which is locked up here?

So in a very real sense, evolution is neither reaching a goal nor becoming something, but allowing that in me which is my true self to become itself, manifest itself as the true Creator, the Almighty. It is the *amsha* [part] of the Almighty. So this is a somewhat different idea of spiritual growth and evolution. It is like opening a cage and allowing the parrot to escape into its freedom. We have to open our heart. Of course, all that we say in Sahaj Marg as a process is correct, that *pranahuti* must come, the Master must find his way into my heart. What for? So that he can release my true being, my true self, my divine nature and becoming one with it, which is what we mean by *layavasth*a [the state of merger], come out and say, "Look what this is."

It is no more he or she. It is 'It'. The soul has no sex. God has no sex. The Ultimate has no sex. Sex is a means of procreation. Between the guru and the disciple there is this very real process of creation. Babuji used to say, "I seed the heart of the abhyasi with myself." In occult language the heart is known as the *hridaya yoni.* It is that place of birth where conception, spiritual conception takes place, from where the new being must be born – new in the sense that he has been there locked up as a potential egg for perhaps millions of years. Now the guru puts his seed into it, fertilises it and we must allow it to be born. If after that also we keep our hearts closed, it will become a rotten egg unfit for anything.

Now there is so much talk of being with the Master and this and that. I don't understand all this talk. What for? When somebody asks, "Why do you meditate?" there is a real answer that is, we are all meditating all the time without knowing we are meditating. We say, "I am thinking." If you are thinking of the same subject all the time, which is what we often do, it is meditation. The word 'thinking' is misapplied. Thinking is something passing. Continuous thinking is, you can say, a pensive state. When it is about the same thing, it is meditation. So it is like a train: if it is starting here and stopping there, it is no train; if it is continuing on its journey, it becomes a train.

So what is the difference between thinking and meditating? Thinking is for a moment about something; meditation is continuous thinking about one and only one thing. So it is a natural process. When a man is worried about what he is going to tell his boss tomorrow, and he is thinking all the time, and his wife says, *"Pareshaan kyon ho? Khana lagi, aao."* [Why are you worried? Food is served, come.] He says, *"Tum jao. Hum vichaar kar rahen hain."* [You go, I am thinking.] So, meditation is something everybody does – the wise, the fool, the rich, the poor, the Muslim, the Hindu, anybody in the world. We are all meditating all the time but we do not know about it. And we have to be told to meditate. What a shame! [It is] something which is so natural to the human condition, in which we are all the time involved – but unfortunately only in a negative sense. We think only of our problems. "I have no money. What shall I do? School fees have to be paid tomorrow. Where shall I get it from?" If instead of that meditation on the negative, on the problems of life, we should divert the mind to the positive, to the beauties of life, what a change there is!

Now the Master exemplifies such a focus of change. Does a lover exist who would not like to be with his beloved all the time? Meetings are few and far between. *Chori, chori, chupke, chupke* [stealthily, quietly] – all these words from the Hindi movies. Why 'chori, chori'? Why 'chupke, chupke'? Because it is not openly possible, it is not possible all the time. So you have this idea of a brief meeting, few moments, few minutes, for which the whole day is spent in meditation. All the time the lover is sitting, thinking of the beloved. Time passes. There is no knowledge of the passage of time. It is raining and it has stopped raining – the lover does not know. Food has been prepared, laid on the table, gone cold, removed and thrown away to the dog – he is unaware. How? Because he is in a state of constant remembrance. So constant remembrance is as natural as meditation. Only one who can love or has loved can know how easy it is to be in constant remembrance. Therefore to meditate, it is only an understanding that meditation is natural – as natural to me as breathing – that only the subject of meditation has to be changed, nothing more – this is taught.

Constant remembrance is as easy as the lover thinking all the time of his beloved, provided I have someone to love. Unfortunately, most of us have nobody to love. We all talk of love and say we love our wives, we love our children. It is all false. I don't think human beings really exist today who are capable of that love of which we speak here. This love between a man and a woman, between the father and the children, between the mother and her child, it is a conventional love, a social love, a love born out of instinct, not from the heart. Every mother protects her child. How is an *adivasi* [tribal] woman who is a mother different from a Brahmin mother or from a Marwari millionairess? They all look after their children. Every animal looks after its child. What is so wonderful about the female loving her child? So we are glorifying something that is purely instinctive, instinctual. Why do we protect our children and love them? Because our future is in them. Why does a man weep when his son fails in the exam? Because his pride is hurt. "How can my child fail?" "Why should my daughter remain unmarried?"

So, it is the question of 'mine'; the *aham* [I] is there. I love not my child for its sake, I love my child for my sake – what the sage Yagnyavalkya told his wife in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad: "Not for the sake of the wife is the wife dear to the husband, my dear," he says, "but it is for the sake of the self in the wife that the wife is dear to him." This is the wisdom of ten thousand years of age; we don't read these things now. We read of romantic love, of passionate love, of criminal love – see it on the pictures, in the movies, and fool ourselves into thinking that this brief flirtation is love. Love is a very profound thing. It is a very sacred thing. If it exists, its existence cannot be known. Where you see it existing, it is a sham. So to go about and say, like in the movies, *"Tujhse pyaar hogaya mujhe"* [I am in love with you] – all this nonsense – it is fraudulent, it is cheating, it is lying. Therefore in the Hindu tradition, no husband tells his wife, "I love you." You can see the difference in the West and the

East in this culture. In the West they are always saying "I love you", and they are never loving. Here at least we hope sometimes we love, though we don't talk about it.

So, when we find somebody we can love dispassionately, with total detachment, with no *sauda* [barter] implied there – I am not loving somebody to get something. That is cheap, that is market love (*bazaari pyaar).* If a man goes to his guru thinking, "I shall get something from this fellow today", it *is* a bazaari thing, it is a sauda. The price has fallen. *Giri hui cheez ki keemat kya hai?* What is the price of that which has fallen? At the highest level it is price-*less*. Here it has no price; there it is priceless. There it cannot be spoken about, it cannot be discussed. Perhaps a fleeting glance between the pair of lovers which speaks of all eternity, the love that should be of eternity. So if we find such a person, how can you not be with him all the time, if not physically, at least in your thought? Is not constant remembrance a natural thing, therefore? Do you have to practise constant remembrance? Do you have to *make* it constant?

So we must look at the process as something, [and] the natural state of *being* as something. Nobody becomes God, because God never became God. God was not a man who became

God. He was a not a dog who became God, he was not an atom who became God. God was God, is God, will always be God. That is why you say He is *sarva, sarvasva, sarvajna and sarvavyaapi* [all, having all the wealth, all- knowing and all-pervasive], everything. Bigger than the biggest, smaller than the smallest, *sab kuch* [everything]. He cannot be described. Nothing can be said about him. He is before creation. He is after destruction and dissolution.

So, becoming God is wrong. Becoming *like* Him is something better. And how to become? Because when you are with the beloved you would like to do everything that pleases the beloved, so that you can have the approbation of the beloved, the love of the beloved, a smile, a glance of tenderness. So, through trying to please – not again with a motive that if I do this and this I will get this and this – not at all. It is totally like a dog which is lying at the feet of its master, looking up, not knowing why it is looking at him, not knowing why it is there but alert to the guru's little finger movement, and the dog is up.

That is why Babuji praised a dog so much. He said reverse d-o-g and you have G-o-d, and it is not without reason that Dattatreya [a Hindu god] had four dogs. Yama went in the form of a dog along with Dharmaputra [Yudhishthira] when he ascended to heaven. [It was] a test. He said, "*Kutta hai*" [it is a dog], but that kutta is the thing which is valuable. "*Abe kutte,*" [you dog] we say, when we want to speak derisively of somebody. But that kutta has more faithfulness than the human being who is addressing it with such scorn. "*Abe kutte,*" we say, and if the kutta could reply, it would say, "*Abe insaan, chup reh!*" [You human, shut up!] Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately for our ego, dogs cannot speak. In any case, their love for the master is too great for them to think of what the master is. "He is my master, it is enough." It is the old Hindu tradition again, that a wife never thinks of what her husband is. "*Yeh dekhiye padausi kitne sundar hain. Yeh hamaari badnasibi [hai].*" [See how handsome my neighbour is. It is my bad luck....] The moment she thinks like this, it is already immoral. *Manasaa, vaachaa, hastaabhyam* [with mind, speech, hands], says the prayer. Sin begins in the mind. The body is only an instrument.

You know the story of the *rishi-patni* [a sage's wife] who went to take water from the river. She had the *shakti* [power] that from the river mud she could fashion a *ghada* [pot] in which to bring water. In the river water she saw the *pratibimba* [reflection], the reflection of some *apsaras* [celestial nymphs] or somebody going on top, and she said, "How beautiful they are!" She lost her power; she could not make a *ghada*. She came home without water. A thought, a momentary thought. Therefore raja yoga gives importance to thought, mind. Why mind? Why meditation? Why regulation of the thought? Because there is the *arambha kshetra* [primary field]. If you don't begin properly you cannot end properly. And what is the *muladhara* [central support]? Not in the base of the spine. The muladhara for us is in the mind.

It is again invertendo. They begin with the bottom and muladhara, *swadishthana* [a chakra situated in the navel region], etc. They go up to *sahasrara chakra* [a chakra at the crown of the head]. We begin with the muladhara right here. In this sense – that we think, we think continuously of one thing – we are meditating. We have something to love, therefore we are able to love, we are able to love continuously, which is constant remembrance. Through that love we remember. If I cannot be with him physically, let me be with him at least mentally, in my thoughts.

So, Sahaj Marg is an extraordinarily simple thing to be practised naturally. Therefore it is 'Sahaj' Marg. Why naturally? Is there something that can be *practised* naturally? Wrong again.

There is no such thing as a natural practice. I don't practise breathing, I don't practise eating. Meditation has to be done, not to be practised. As I said, all that we have to do is to select the object of meditation, instead of making it my problems, my worries, my boss, my sickness, my daughter's marriage. Let me make it an evolutionary goal. Let me think about Him who will take me there. So, meditation is beautifully simple. I do not know why people find difficulty, and they say, "I have to accept meditation." Accept what? But you are already accepting. You are already meditating from the moment you are born. Are you not breathing from the moment you are born? Are you not dead when it stops? Have you ever been thoughtless?

So what is this thoughtlessness of meditation? It is a state of absorption – absorbed in one thought so that we lose consciousness. No *hosh* [consciousness] any more – *behoshi* [state of no-consciousness], and then everything is passing. The world is rotating, the sun and moon go on in their cycles, and he is still there. What are you doing? I do not know. Do you know how much time has passed? I do not know. What have you been doing? I cannot say. You cannot say or will not say? Well, I will not say. Why? Because it is too sacred. What is so sacred about it? Love.

So, this is a way of looking at Sahaj Marg, which I would urge all of you to think about, not to accept something which you are already doing. My Master used to say [that] only a constipated man has to sit in the toilet, and think of passing his excreta out. A natural function when it stops is a problem. When we don't meditate, we are sick. We are spiritually constipated. The heart in which there is no love for another person is spiritually closed, blocked. If it continues like that, that heart is dead. When it dies it can take, nobody knows, how many lives again for the *divya sparsha* [divine touch] of a guru to awaken it into the possibility of love again. There is the dead heart – there is the heart which is awakened to the possibility of love – then finally there is a heart full of love. This is our way of progress.

Thank you.

12

An Integrated Human

Respected members of the faculty, friends, brothers and sisters,

I am delighted to be here today. I say delighted because once I had an opportunity to speak at a school, and I was so nervous that I made a mess of the whole job. Academic institutions are a little frightening to the outsider, but when one has the experience of having been inside one, the fright is double. From inside we know the frightening aspects of education; from outside it is even worse. But later on, once I had to talk in Singapore before a school audience. At that time, somehow I managed to pick up some courage because my Guruji, my Master, was sitting near and I could not disappoint him.

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6 August 1992, Sonepat, India

Why I am relating this rather unnecessary little story is that when I had my Guruji next to me and I had to speak before him, I lost all my fear of the audience, I lost my fear of not being able to express myself properly. In fact, I spoke as if I was not speaking at all. Later on I discussed this with my Guruji, and he said, "You are right." When you are conscious that you are doing something, 'your' capacity comes into play – 'your' in quotation marks – and 'your' capacity is always limited. 'Your' education is always limited. 'Your' wealth is limited. 'Your' potential is limited. Again, all the time, 'your' in quotation marks applying to everybody here and everybody all over the world. So when we deal from within our own potential, we are limiting it however big that potential must be, because no human being can claim to have infinite potential at his command. All human beings have limitations: limitations of intellect, limitations of capacity and limitations of understanding. Limitation of understanding is the most important, because unless you understand something, you are not going to be able to make somebody else understand what you are trying to say.

I came to my Master's holy feet in 1964. I came as an arrogant, proud, young fellow, very successful. I had a reasonably good academic career. Benares {Hindu} University was a very well-known institution in those days, and to me a student of B.H.U. was considered something like having feathers on your head. And I had considerable success in my employment. You have heard some of it. So I came to him, very proud. When I went to Shajahanpur and saw him in his dilapidated old house, and he, looking like a *fakir* {a mendicant saint}, thin, small man with a beard, not very alert, as I thought, looking a little awkward, ill at ease with me, I was wondering what this spirituality is all about. In fact I asked him, "What is this spirituality all about?" And he said, "It is about the making of man."

Spirituality makes men and women of us. To be more explicit, we come into this world with a bunch or a load of samskaras, what you call karma in Hinduism. We call it samskara – our own creation by our thoughts and activities of the past: past lives, past years, past minutes, past hours. Anything that we do or think or we say leaves an impression upon us. These impressions harden into samskaras. Any of you who have had an association with geology, and especially palaeontology, know how fossils are formed. Hard stuff compressed between layers of soil, they leave their impressions. The object washed away or eaten away, and the impression remains as a fossil. Millions of years later, you can still see it. Oil is such a fossilised substance, incidentally.

So we come with diverse tendencies. It is a well-known thing that a human being is not one human being. We are many. In each one of us there is a multiplicity of personalities vying with each other for expression. That is why the same man appears good to some people, bad to some people, indifferent to some people, wise to some people, foolish to others, brave to some, lacking courage to others. It is not that people see us differently but that we manifest different facets of our character, of our being, to different people at different times according to the environment. It is like a crystal reflecting light. Sometimes it reflects the yellow, sometimes the red, sometimes the green. It is fascinating particularly with the diamond, where there is a total internal reflection of light. You just turn it around, face by face, and you see brilliant display of colours. In a diamond it is good, but in a human being it is not good.

A human being must be a single human being, an integrated personality. What is this integration? The word integration means, it is based I suppose on the word 'integer', one. I read once an article in the *Reader's Digest*, long ago, thirty-forty years back, talking about 'the integrity of the human being'. When one is divided by anything else, it becomes a fraction. So when we are divided against ourselves, my moral values clashing with my, what we today call realistic values, it is a modern problem, it is a traumatic problem; it creates trauma in all of us. On one side we have our ideals; on the other side we have our dharmic equivalent of those ideals – *satyam vada, dharmam chara* [speak truth, do righteous deeds]; and on the third side, the third corner of the triangle, to be what people call realisticBe realistic, *yaar* [friend]." All students must have heard this so many times: "Don't smoke." "Be realistic. How can you not smoke in a campus?"

So this idea of being realistic clashing with our idea of idealistic and our moralistic views is precisely creating what is creating a schizophrenic society today. Now this has happened over, I don't know, how many thousands of years because at one time, if history is to be believed, in the Vedic times perhaps or even the pre-Vedic times, the human being had one goal, to evolve. Today we have many goals. Evolution has ceased to be a goal at all. For one thing, the human being is so arrogant. I deliberately use the word 'arrogant'. He is so arrogant that he thinks he is at the peak of evolution. He forgets the past evolutionary history starting from the oceans, what they call the primeval ooze. We were nothing but that ooze sometime in the past. We are nothing but bipeds parading around with our pride and our haughtiness and our arrogance today, and if we continue like this, we shall be nothing else, perhaps descending again into the quadrupedal or even lower forms of life. Unlike Christianity and other religions, Hinduism foresees the possibility of a human being reborn in any way, depending on his samskaras. He can be an animal, he can be a bird, he can be a fish.

So at the human level, we have the ability to go up the evolutionary ladder or go down the evolutionary ladder. Everything up to the human level evolves upwards. If we are able to escape this trap of human existence, then our evolution is again automatic. Here, unfortunately we have been given the choice, and a choice is a very dangerous thing as any human being can understand, whether a child or an old man, whether a student or a professor, whether a sage or a scoundrel, whether a man or a woman. A choice is a very difficult thing to handle. I have seen it with children, I have seen it with my son and I have seen it with students. Students are confused because they don't know how to handle a choice.

"All right, I have passed out of school, what shall I do? Should I go for computer science, should I go for medicine, should I go for mechanical engineering?" Here comes the problem, whether I should make a career for myself which will help me evolve further, or should I just rest content with money-making and degrees? This is just by way of illustration.

So a situation where we have a choice, it may give us a false idea that we are free to choose as we choose, but it is a very dangerous thing. People have been stranded without knowing where to go: no road markers, no signposts. You know their bewilderment. There are only four roads going north, east, west and south, but which road shall I take? Which is the best for me? Somebody says, "Make money; that is the most important thing today." Your heart says, "Forget medicine. Because your father is a doctor, so why should you be a doctor? I want to be an artist." Father says, "Stupid fellow, what will you earn? Will you paint houses? Are you going to be a Rembrandt or a Raphael?" Our parents, God bless them, reduce our ideals day by day. I love my parents too, but I don't worship them anymore.

In Hinduism there is this absolutely, blatantly false idea of *pitru* [departed ancestors] worship. I am grateful to my parents. I respect my parents. I regard my parents. Most of all I love my parents. Worship? No! In India this idea of worship has been totally lost. We worship everybody. We worship a political leader. Somebody has to come by plane, a *mantri* [minister] from somewhere, and everybody is falling at his feet. It is nauseating to see it on the television screen, day after day, and especially when you know that man has a criminal record, has been in jail and still people fall at his feet for petty favours, and especially when you remember that you have elected him to his post and now you are falling at his feet, it is even worse.

So in the materialistic society, we have been cut into pieces like the frog or the toad under the scalpel of a medical student. The word 'integration' comes precisely here because we have, as we say in Hindi, *vibhinn* [a variety]. There is no single human being today. There is the avaricious human being, there is the lustful human being, there is the idealistic human being hidden somewhere in the heart. There is the brave human being who is afraid to go out in the dark. There is the foolish human being who is bewailing his fate, who says, "Such is my potency. I am of the essence of God who created me and yet look at me today. I have lost my ideals, I have lost my direction, I have lost my orientation." And eventually, if you are successful as they say today, success is a godin Hindu society, in Indian society. I don't know what success means if in my life I am a failure.

In the Bible, it asks, "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" Every temptation, whether it is of the Christ or the Buddha, was the last temptation. On the mount, the devil or *shaitan* coming and saying, "All that you see before you is yours. You want to see your grandson's grandson's grandson? It is done. You want dominion over the world? It is yours. Bow before me!" This is success. You cannot be successful in the modern sense without bowing at the feet of every crook, every charlatan, and every scoundrel today. Take it from me.

So what are we supposed to do? Don't we have to eat? I can hear some students thinking there, don't we have to eat? Every beggar on the street eats. The fact that the beggar of yesterday is there today to beg from you proves that he has eaten. If he is there tomorrow, you have to wonder how this blighter is still there. He is a beggar, how dare he be here? What right has he to be here? Who fed him? Well, you fed him with your ten paisas, five paisas and half-a-rupee.

Just by the way, I will tell you a story. I was walking around the streets of Madras, one day. A man in a suit was walking ahead of me, looking for a taxi. One beggar kept pestering him. Finally, he took out a ten-rupee note and thrust it in his hands and said, "Are you satisfied?" He said, *"Ji,"* [sir] and *"salaam"* [salute], and something like that, and he is muttering to himself in Tamil, "This must be black money. Who will give away ten rupees to a beggar?" Even a beggar does not believe a rich man today, nor his heart, because when you give ten rupees, even a beggar says, "[It is] black money." You see the wisdom of the beggar there. This is not a laughing matter.

I am not against riches, I am not against rich men, but if the rich man is also evolving on the road to spirituality, following the spiritual goal, trying to integrate himself into that one personality from which we have descended.... God is one – *ekam sat*. God is not many. In the Hindu pantheon of gods and goddesses, it is a shame, it is a scandal that we have twenty-one thousand gods or sixty-one thousand gods, I don't know how many because daily we are adding one more to the list.

The old philosophy says that God created man in his own image. Modern philosophy says: man creates God in his own image. We create gods and goddesses according to need. If I am sick, my god is a physician, Dhanvantari. If I am poor, my goddess is Lakshmi, because she must bless me. "*Ma, dehi* – {Mother}, please give me." Beggar!

One of the first stories my Master told me was about a sannyasi who went to ask the famous Moghul, Great Akbar, as he was called, for a donation to build an ashram. The emperor's *dwarapalas* {gatekeepers} refused attendance. He said, "I am a holy man, don't you see my garb?" They said, "He is at prayers. The emperor, the *shahenshah* is doing his prayers." He said, "*Koi baat nahin*. {No problem} I am also a spiritual man. I am also a religious man. I will join him in his prayers." So he went and sat outside the emperor's prayer room, and there Akbar the Great was asking God, "Please give me more empire, more dominion, more wives, more wealth, more gold", everything. This sannyasi was nauseated. He got up to go away. Akbar looked down and said, "Wait! I will quickly finish my puja and listen to your request." He said, "What will you give me? You are yourself begging. I will beg from Him from whom you are begging."

So in spirituality we prefer {that} if at all we have to beg, beg of Him who will give you with unstinted hands, who will give you with love; not as if He is discharging an obligation in society, not as if He is throwing a few rupees to get rid of a nuisance. Most of us look on beggars as a nuisance or as something vile, shameful, that we try to avoid. Like when we walk through the streets of our villages, the roads of our villages, we pretend that all the excreta on both sides doesn't exist, *neti, neti*. As Advaita philosophy says, *"Neti, neti"* – not there, not there.

So we have been denying the existence of good, denying the existence of evil, accepting the existence only of myself, not the higher Self but the lower self – me. I must survive; therefore competitiveness. Why competitiveness? Are we not having the world at large to feed us? What is the need to be competitive? What is the need to be aggressively competitive? Why competitive examinations? Because I must succeed, devil take the rest.

So when this idea of success becomes opposed to the idea of evolution, we have aggressiveness, we have competitiveness, we have greed, we have avarice. We have all these negative traits, and society encourages them. Only yesterday I was reading about the Olympic Games, now being played elsewhere, that the original idea of Olympic Games is lost. There is no more an Olympic flame, there is no more an Olympic spirit, when people resort to drugs to win a race to take home a small medal whether it is gold, silver or bronze is immaterial to see their names in papers.

When today people say it is better to be a criminal if the news agency flashes your name in the paper a hundred times, it doesn't matter. "I am in the public eye," he says. I have a friend who is a politician. He told me once in a confidential conversation, "*Chari sahib, aap bewakoof hain.*" [Chari sir, you are a fool] I said, "I have never disputed it, I am a bewakoof, but why? What is your reason? Because many people have told me different reasons for my *bevakoofi* [foolishness] – what is your reason?" He said, "What is this business of God? Come to me, I will make you rich." I said, "Only yesterday I saw that there are criminal proceedings pending against you." He said, "As long as I am in politics, they cannot touch me. So I am in politics so that I should not be touched." Look at this nonsense. He said, "You come to politics, *aap ko malamaal kardenge.*" [We will make you rich] I said, "If you come to me, do you know what you will get?" He nodded as if perking up his ears. He said, "Yes, *kya milega humein?*" [What will I get?] I said, "Nothing." He said, "Surely, you must be joking." I said, "Not at all. In spirituality, we take away everything that you have built up as a character: your greed, your lust, your avarice, your foolishness which you think is wisdom, your aggressiveness which sets brother against brother, family against family. We have away all this. What is left is the pure, unsullied soul, which is nothing. Are you prepared for it?" He said, "Chari sahib, maybe after twenty years, if I am still alive." I said, "Well, opportunity comes two-three times in one's lifetime."

Why I say this is because somebody has very thoughtfully put this programme in front of me to remind me of the subject. I tend to wander here and there. What I want to tell you is, 'integration' is the wrong word according to spirituality, because this says, 'Integrated Development of Mankind and Sahaj Marg'. In Sahaj Marg, there is no integration. Integration is when you have many parts put together to make a whole. What we do is to remove all the superfluous characteristics that we have built up for ourselves: the false courage, the real pride, the foolish bravery, and the ephemeral riches on which we place our faith.

Riches are very ephemeral. Today's millionaire is tomorrow's jail bird. Where are they today? Where are the shahenshahs of the past? So much has been in Indian history – where are the great men? They are only names in books. What is the true spirit of India which is still going through us as some sort of river bed over which India is still flowing? It is not culture as we still understand it. *Samskriti* [culture] is a poor term for it. It is the soul. The unifying factor today is the soul of humanity. If that soul is lost, all is lost. If that soul is covered, the light is dimmed. If it is covered with more and more coverings, the light exists inside but it cannot come outside. What have we to do? Like peeling an onion, layer by layer we remove it, and what happens when you take the final layer off? There is nothing. Inside the onion is nothing. Inside the apple is nothing. Inside the orange is nothing. Inside you too is that 'nothing'. We won't say 'nothing' in Sahaj Marg. We say 'nothingness' because there is something. It has no qualities, it has no attributes, it has no names exactly as the *parabrahma,* as we say, the Ultimate has no quality, no form, no name, and no substance. This nothingness is *the* thing that we should have.

Now how to go about this disintegration which we must view here as integration? Integration of mankind is impossible. My Master was once asked this question by some eminent people from Delhi, senior ministers of the government of India. He said, "Until the human being is perfect, society cannot be perfect." You know, you are all engineers here. Any part in a machine breaks down, the whole machine breaks down. The smallest fault in a computer, the whole computer fails. Somewhere electricity fails we were sitting here wondering if the speech would be there or not. Integration is a play of cooperation of a multitude of parts to create a perfect whole, and it is axiomatic, it is an engineering fact. It is a necessity that each part must be perfect before the whole can be perfect. Now when you talk about integrating mankind, it is an impossibility until every human being is a perfect human being.

Like if you have, as my Master used to say, one boil on the little finger of your hand, the whole body suffers. It is not only the little finger that suffers, the whole body suffers – dub-dub-dub, with every pulse you feel the pain. Put a lance through it and remove the pus, the whole body is at peace. It is not the heart that is having trouble, the whole human being is suffering with heart problems or kidney problems or brain problems. It is an unfortunate fact of modern science, of western, occidental education, that from synthesis we have gone the other way, of analysis. Our studies are analytical. We are, today, breaking the whole up into parts, studying the parts and trying to figure out the whole. Our ancient way of knowledge, of evolutionary knowledge, is a synthesis of everything to create that grand experience of the wholesomeness of unity. So when we mix the two systems of education, we are bewildered and we are a lost society, as India is very much today. We have engineers, but our bridges are falling into pieces, our rails are being derailed. It's no use blaming the terrorists, they are only contributing one percent of the total failure. The whole of the Indian society is in a mess precisely because our ideals are eastern and our education is western, in-between I am caught because I don't know which to add.

Now I am not suggesting that western education is bad – it is excellent. But we must use it properly. If I am given a knife, I can use it to cut bread or I can use it to cut somebody's throat; the knife is not at fault. I am the user of the knife. Are we being taught knowledge or are we being taught to use knowledge also? There used to be a subject called axionoetics – I don't know how many of you are familiar with it – which is the study of the knowledge of the knowledge. Why am I learning something? What for? Because today I find chemists in the IAS, brilliant botanists and zoologists in the IPS, brilliant doctors doing drama, other brilliant PhDs in business. What is the relationship of my education to my life? It is not answered because materialism has taken over. Today it is not an educated man that we want to produce; it is a successful man, which means ipso facto a rich man, a wealthy man.

So, all our education is a fraud. We are learning things which we are never going to use. What is the use of spending four-and-a-half lakhs, which society is supposed to be spending on producing a doctor, if that fellow is going to do business after his graduation? I know at least ten doctors like that. By the grace of my Master I have been able to persuade one such doctor to go back to medicine. I have been able to convince him that to save a life is much more of a social service than to amass seven lakhs for himself every year. But how many people can you change like that? They say,*"Aap bewakoof hain!"* [You are a fool!], like that politician told me. He said, "*Aap ka khana kahan se aata hai*?" [Where do you get your food from?] He is a very good friend, otherwise I would have considered it as rudeness. Does the doctor say, "I can't make him well because he will not come back tomorrow for medicine"? Which doctor says it? He is happy that the man should come again and again and again and again and fill his pockets, isn't it? Are we not making shoddy goods so that they can be sent for repair again and again? Are not spare parts for cars more expensive than the originals that went into the making of the car? A human being is a cheap commodity in a cheap society today, where cheap stuff is being sold to cheap people. And why are they cheap? Substitute the 'p' with a 't', and you know why. Cheats! We are cheating ourselves. No man can cheat others who has not already cheated himself.

When I lose my sense of values, my sense of morals, my sense of ethics, my sense of integrated personality within myself, which says, I must not be three different things to three different people.... An integrated person is one who is the same under all circumstances under any situation. A diamond is a diamond in the hands of the beggar as it is in the hands of a rich man. It does not change its quality. Water is water in the glass of a rich man or in the glass of a poor man. Wheat is wheat whether a poor man grows or a rich multimillionaire's farm grows it. Why do we change from person to person, from society to society, from *vatavaran to vatavaran* [environment to environment], fawning before somebody, arrogant before somebody else and kicking a servant in his face?

Are we human beings? Occasionally yes, God help us! At least that much remains that occasionally we are still human enough to feel ashamed at our shamelessness. Strong words, yes. Strong disease needs strong medicine. All this story about *Bharat mera mahaan* [India is great]; *sare jahaan se achcha, Hindustan* [India is the best of the world] – what are these stories that we play on the fifteenth of August? *Sare jahaan se achcha Hindustan hamara*. We are telling ourselves lies, allowing it to be sung from treetops, from battlements, from fortresses, from forts. Every lion is singing a song of glory. It is better to reinstate that glory rather than sing about the glory which does not exist.

One of my most sorrowful moments was when I saw a book by a professor of Oxford, Mr A.L. Basham, which was titled *The Wonder that was India*. In the past! I hope you have not forgotten tenses. *The Wonder that was India*! I mean every Indian should be ashamed to see such books being sold. We should be ashamed to hear what foreigners say of us. We should be ashamed to see that a dollar that was worth three rupees twenty years ago is worth thirty rupees today. We should be ashamed that a man who is worth thirty is getting three thousand, whereas a man worth three thousand is getting paid fifteen rupees. As Meera sings in one of our bhajans, *"Murakh murakh raja hove, pandit phirat bhikhari."* [The fool is a king; the learned, a beggar].

This is the condition of our society topsy-turviness, invertendo – where the cheap, the ignorant have been raised to positions of glory, and the transcendental, glorious beings are being stepped upon by us in the dust and crushed in the earth. If this goes on, you will have a mindless machine which will ruin all of you in the same space. I was reading a novel yesterday about political despots who sell their countries wealth just so that they can become millionaires. Their forests are cut down, paper mills are established, and today there is so much talk about pollution, environmental protection. We hear some poor, ten-fifteen people who are saying, "This is a rain forest which should not be destroyed to build a dam." Who listens to them? Who is there to listen to them? Because every one of you, if you don't listen to them, tomorrow you will have no forest, no rain, no water, no children, no grandchildren.

Integration of human beings is not just a spiritual ideal, please remember this. It is a most necessary and important social ideal. If we do not reverse this trend towards materialisation and materialism, towards blatant self-projection, towards blatant self-development, towards blatant self-enrichment, we are creating a society of monsters which will override all of us. Communism lasted only seventy years in the U.S.S.R. Seventy years is hardly one human being's lifespan. They were under the yoke, as they said, of communism, but see how easily it has been thrown overboard. Where is that mighty empire, Union of Soviet Republics? Where is it today? But our society, why is nothing changing it? Because we want it to be as it is, because it gives a chance to the fool to flourish, to the poor to become millionaires, not the real poor but the avaricious poor. It is creating, it has already created, a false society where nothing is as it seems today. Even the gods in the temples are no longer gods; they are only idols of stone or metal to be robbed with impunity by every robber who can walk into it and take it away. Do you mean to say that this could have happened fifty years ago or a hundred years ago, that a man could have dared to enter a temple and take away an idol? It is because today there is no value for God. They say, *"Arey yaar, patthar hai, uthalo. Dekhte hai, kya hota hai."* [Hey friend, it is a stone, take it. Let's see what happens.] And nothing happens.

Why does nothing happen? Why does not a thunder or a lightning strike him dead, as they show in the cinemas? Because God exists only if

I recognise His existence. If I say there is no God, for me there is no God. He may be elsewhere for the whole universe, but for me He doesn't exist. Therefore He neither rewards me nor punishes me, He lets me go my way. Eventually I will be shaken to the core by my destructive tendencies and, one day, I will be vomiting in a river looking at my own image in the water and saying, "God help me!" Then He comes back into my life.

God has to be invited into our lives and that is the true integrating force. Like a tree is a one tree. We don't talk of integrating the branches of a tree with the trunk and the trunk with the roots and to make it one whole. It grows into an integrated structure, a self-balancing, a self-sustaining structure. Unfortunately, materialistic sciences have given us the wrong tendencies, the wrong ideas, that a man should have multiplicity of characters, that he should be this, he should be that, he should also be that the common example being that a man should be a father to his son and a son to his father and a husband to his wife. Is he not so many things at the same time? These are wrong analogies.

You must learn to think properly for yourself. Am I a put-together job? Am I a doll which has been put together piece by piece in a factory, held together by rubber bands? Or am I a single, integrated, wholesome human being? If I am not, why not? If society is as it is, why? Because like me, other human beings are parading who have been put together by society – a society which teaches that education is not necessary, that money is all that it is the be-all and end-all of existence. Success is the god to be worshipped, not God.

So integration of mankind, integrated development of mankind will be only a myth or a dream until each one of us human beings, all over the world, decides to take upon himself or herself the job of an integrated personality in himself or herself. Each piece must be perfected before the whole thing can be perfected. In a jigsaw puzzle where even one piece is wrong, there is no full picture. Every child knows this, every mechanic knows this, every sick person knows this. So why don't educated people realise it, wise people realise it? Because the idealism of the human being – the innate idealism, the natural idealism – has been supplanted by a false materialism which says, "Be successful, everything else will fall into place." But when you see successful people rolling in misery, wealthy miserable beyond even a beggar's dreams, a beggar is comparatively better off. He knows where he is. Why are rich people insecure, powerful people insecure, successful people insecure? Because they know the ephemerality of wealth, power and success. Today's powerful man is tomorrow's beggar for power. Today's wealthy man is tomorrow's impoverished fellow. But the beggar is at the bottom line, as we call it in economics. His position cannot be shaken. He says, "*Kafi hai* [It is enough] if I get my five rupees a day, I am happy." He sleeps under a tree; he enjoys the cool breezes which we substitute by air-conditioning in our bedrooms. And it is a funny thing I have watched beggars, how healthy they are, precisely because when we give away the leftover food, all the *dal* [lentils] and everything else is at the bottom. They get the best, not the worst.

So dear friends, I am grateful to all of you for inviting me today to give you this talk. I hope it has been sufficiently shocking to wake you all up to the reality of your existence. Your future is in your hands; no God can help. God is a myth if you think of Him as one who is going to help you. "God helps those who help themselves," says the adage. More than that, God Himself has said, if your Puranas are to be believed, that He cannot help because we have created our destiny and live it we must.

I would like to close with a small story from the Shiva Purana, where Shiva and Parvati are going in the *akasha marga* [aerial route] and they see a poor Brahmin, one of the devotees of Lord Shiva, who has not eaten for weeks, thirsty, hungry, and blinded by his hunger. He is walking, going towards his home and does not know how to get there, and he's miserable, and he says, "Oh Lord! Why are you putting me in this state?" Parvati says, "Look at your devotee! Are you not ashamed that your devotee is in this state?" Shiva smiles. He says, "My dear, I cannot do anything." She says, "You, Mahashiva, Sadashiva, Paramashiva, [different names of Lord Shiva] if you cannot do anything, how can I believe it? You must do, I insist." Women are always very imperious when they talk to their husbands; Parvati [was] no less. Shiva said, "My dear, believe me, I can do nothing for him. Anything he has to do, he has to do for himself." Parvati says, "I refuse to accept. Do it." Order! Shiva, by his *shakti* [power], throws a big bundle of jewellery and whatnot in his path. This poor old Brahmin, in his thirst he says, "Now I will be coming to this river and I will drink some water. Because I have only this dhoti, I will walk like this so as to not to get it wet" – and he crosses that bundle of jewellery! Shiva says, "Look Parvati, what did I tell you?" She says, "No, no, this is some humbug. Do it again."

So he transfers it fifty yards further on the path. Now this poor fellow in his imagination has slaked his thirst, now he is hungry. So he says, "I will go home. That wife of mine would not have cooked, not even lit the fire. *Bechari, kahaan se layegi? Kuch toh nahi hai ghar mein!"* [Poor thing, from where will she bring? There is nothing at home!] And he lets fly at the bundle, and then he is hobbling: "Lord, why have you done this to me? Am I not your devotee?"

So Parvati understands that we have created our destiny – we have created it in the past, what is happening in the present; and therefore we have to create in the present our future. The integration of the self is a job which we have to begin now, today, here, if you are serious about it. If that happens, the past loses its hold upon us, the future comes into being. It is a future of our creation. It is a glorious future not only for the self please remember this, because many people criticise spiritual people, yogis, as selfish people who are doing it only for themselves. If today India exists, still exists, it is because of the few great souls who are still in this country, still suffering quietly, without talking about it, patiently doing their *tapasya* [penance], saying, "God, have mercy on this country."

Thank you.

13

Rethink Your Ideas of God

I was talking to one of our new brothers just before satsangh. My talk with him brought up some ideas. I don't know whether they are right or wrong. We are worshipping Lord Krishna, Lord Rama as gods. The idea came to me – on what authority do we think they are gods? Are they really gods? Because they appeared in human forms. Krishna no doubt says, "Come to me alone and I shall release you from all your problems, evils, sins." In fact I had a discussion about this once with the erudite scholar who is also a practising Vaishnav [one who worships Lord Vishnu].

Lord Krishna says in the Gita, "*Aham tvam sarva paapebhyo mokshayishyami maa suchah.*" To me it appeared that what it means is, "I will release you from all sins." To me it appeared,

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after I came to Babuji Maharaj and I'd spent several years doing the sadhana, that this was only half of a promise – because this is a point of ego. All of us want to give up our sins. I don't think there is anybody [who] wants to keep to his sins. We may indulge, but we are feeling guilty, we feel ashamed, we feel nervous, we are afraid of going to hell, but who wants to be released from his virtues, or his good deeds (his *punya*)? To me it appears that Lord Krishna left us with half a coconut, expecting, hoping and preparing Babuji Maharaj to put up the other half of the coconut and to give us a full coconut.

Because only in Sahaj Marg I have found this thought, which Lord Krishna himself says in the Gita again and again: transcend both the opposites. But in his *sloka* [couplet], he says, "*Sarva paapebhyo mokshayishyaami.* [from all sins do I release you.]" So his work was perhaps a bit easy because we are willing to cooperate in the removal of our vices, of our sins, of our negative thoughts, because they are a burden on us. Which person is happy with his misdeeds, with his lies, with his cheating? They say, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown", [but] un-easier lies the head that has sinned.

Therefore when somebody pretends or aspires to be or claims to be a god, and says, "I will relieve you of your sins", we are all willing to cooperate. We may have a sneaking desire, that why not retain a little for the next ten years, fifteen years, twenty years? "Life without sin is not worth living", I heard some of my friends say so. "Stolen fruits are sweetest." At least once in ten years why not have a fling? So there is always a sneaking desire to have some sin left but not all of it.

So we want a god who will relieve us of, say, ninety-five percent of our sins, permitting us in his generosity, in his wisdom, in his understanding of human nature: "Ten percent *theek hai, bhog lo."* [Ten percent is okay, enjoy.] This is our idea of God. We don't want to be sinless. We want to be a little sinful without much sinning; not enough sins to merit hell.

So when it comes to test, if God should test us, what is the limit of a test that he can impose upon us? Like in engineering, you have tests to breaking point – a metal is tested to breaking point. How much can it really bear? This is the old idea of the Hindu religion, the Sanatana Dharma, that human beings are being tested again and again, as if God does not know our mettle – not metal, mettle.

Babuji Maharaj used to say when we spoke of tests – he said, "I don't have to test. I know."

Only he who does not know, tests. He who has never eaten, tastes to see what it is like. So testing and tasting are for the one who does not know and wants to know. Now God cannot possibly be accused of ignorance – in Sahaj Marg, yes, but in Sanatana Dharma, no. He is the all-knower, so there how can He test?

So we are always harping on this problem of sinning, the need to sin a little to keep life enjoyable. What is a life of virtue worth? It is a waste; it is boredom. It is tedium – day after day after day of virtue and prayer. It can be an absolute bore, and then we will say, "For heaven's sake!" I remember it was perhaps Bernard Shaw who said he doesn't want to go to heaven because all his friends are in hell and he would miss them. So even friends we won't have. So we are afraid. You want to give up smoking, you say, "No, no, my friends Ramu and Kittu both smoke. If I give up smoking, they will not tolerate me anymore." You join the police force, everybody, it seems, is taking bribes: "So if I don't take a bribe, I will be thrown out of the force." So we are always trying to keep company with others.

Now unfortunately, the virtuous are few, the saints are few, the rishis are few. So you have no company there. Not even a good tale, forget sinning. Can we not even talk about sin? No. Why not? Because according to the Sandhyavandana mantra: *"Manasaa, vaachaa, hastaabhyaam"* – from the mind to speech, through the hands and the other *indriyas* [sense organs], comes sin.

So this is a difficult idea. What is God? Why is God? Who is God? I have had a lot of short discussions with Babuji Maharaj about God, and he said, "He neither exists nor not exists." This is even more troublesome. How can something neither exist nor not exist? And in support of his statement he quoted the Nasadiya Sukta, where it says, "It is neither *sat* nor *asat.*" *Naasadaasid no asadaasitt adaaneem.* [There was neither being nor non-being (existence and non-existence) in the beginning.] Not *sat,* not *asat.* How can something neither exist nor not exist? So that which exists can be God; that which not exists can also be God. So we can have a Rama, who is a god according to us, and an Absolute who never existed in a form, with a name, with attributes, also as the God, as the Ultimate.

Then one day, Babuji told me something which was very astonishing. He said, "God is not a person." Now we are always thinking of God as a person, sitting in his *simhasana* [throne] up somewhere in heaven, all gold and angels, silver people, beautiful girls fanning him on both sides. This is one idea of God, that there are always beautiful girls around Him, fanning Him. I don't know why they should fan in heaven! Presumably there is air conditioning there! I cannot think of a God roasting in sunshine and having to be fanned. But this is our conception. And sitting on a throne! Why on a throne? So our imagination has led us to believe or to create a God in this form and with the attributes and with all the paraphernalia of divinity that *we* expect of Him. So God is our creation.

Krishna was a human being. He was born in this world. He died in this world. He lived in this world. He taught here. He fought here; he did not fight also, when the need for him to fight came. Look at that man, who went around killing *rakshasas* and *asuras* [demons] from day one of his birth. But at the vital moment, when the Mahabharata was being fought, he said, "I will not fight."

Himsa and *ahimsa* [violence and non-violence] – he murdered people left and right. And because God did it, we call them sinners – *paapis*, asuras, rakshasas [sinners, demons]. Had he been thought of as rakshasa or asura, they would have been virtuous people, which means, again, it is by comparison that he is God. These are rakshasas, therefore he must be divine. But he manifested certain qualities which we expect

– which *we* expect God to have. Therefore we say Krishna is God.

So where is God? Does he really exist? Does God exist as a person? My Master categorically said, no. God is a principle, like goodness is a principle, morality is a principle, chastity is a principle. He in whom this principle exists is That. He in whom there is intelligence is an intelligent man.

Nowadays we confuse these things. We confuse a powerful man with intelligence. "Oh, he is very powerful, therefore he must be intelligent. He is very rich, therefore he must be [intelligent]." Not at all. A rich man can be a fool. A powerful man can be stupid. So each principle must abide in him. Therefore we say he has all the *lakshanas* [distinct features]. A principle is a lakshana. It is not necessarily something which is beautiful. Lakshana means that which can adorn. Intelligence adorns a human being. Mercifulness, compassion, they adorn you. They form things of which humanity is proud. He is a compassionate man. He is a merciful person. That is why we say God is merciful – Rahman Al-Raheem, something like that.

Why do we think of God as merciful? Because we need mercy. Why do we think of God as the all-giver? Because we need wealth. Why do we think of Him as one who can cure everything? Because we are sick. Why do we think of Him as knowledge? Because we are ignorant. So, depending upon our need, we create our gods. Therefore you find particular people worshipping particular deities. The man who wants to go to the *akhada* [wrestling arena] and become a *pehelwan* [wrestler], he is worshipping Hanuman. He doesn't care a jot about Vishnu and Shiva and all this nonsense. He says, "Hanumanji." Another fellow wants riches. He gets hold of Lakshmi and catches hold of her feet. One wants knowledge – as our brother said this morning, he was worshipping everybody because he wanted everything, perhaps. I don't know; we have to ask him for clarification. Because he was worshipping Durga; he was worshipping in Kasi – you cannot help worshipping Vishwanath, he is the deity there. So when you want everything you worship everybody. If you want only one thing, you worship one god. If you want nothing, what will you worship?

So this is the question that so-called orthodox believers in religion and religious gods and goddess should ask themselves. What do I want? If the answer is nothing, worship nothing. It appears a little absurd to say, "Worship nothing", but when you say 'nothing', it is nothingness, really. It is also a principle where there is the principle of nothingness; there is nothing – nothing tangible, nothing perceptible, nothing which you can feel or see or touch or taste. But yet there is something which we call nothing. Therefore there *is* something, but it partakes of the essence of nothingness. Therefore we say it is something, it is also nothing. Therefore it exists and does not exist. Therefore it is *sat,* also *asat*. Therefore it can manifest or withdraw from manifestation. But what is It that manifests or does not manifest. It is that principle, the ultimate principle of Godhead which we call the Absolute, which in its state, permanent state, is of the essence of nothingness. But according to our Master it can manifest by a simple process called *kshobh* [stir]. A little stir, as Babuji said, and creation came into being. So it did not go around creating the worlds with the salt and pepper or with clay. Just an impulse, and *srishti* [creation] came into being. Another impulse, and there will be *mahapralaya* [final dissolution].

So worshippers should at least know what they are thinking of, what they are doing. It is stupid to go on worshipping things about which we know nothing. It is even stupider to claim to be orthodox and religious, when you don't know anything about what you are doing. "Why are you worshipping?" "Because my father worshipped."

"Why did your father worship?" "Because my grandfather worshipped." You understand? I am aiming directly for the orthodox, and we have all been orthodox. We have been proud of being orthodox. We have been arrogant about having been orthodox. "No, no sir, I am very orthodox." Like this, you know, as if I am in the akhada. "Oh, I see! What is this orthodoxy about which you speak?" "I worship Rama." "I see! Which Rama?" "What is this, sir? Everybody knows Rama!" "Yes, but do you know Rama – you, the worshipper of Rama?" "No, no, my father told me the stories from Ramayana." "Aha, stories from the Ramayana, not about Rama himself." "No, no, sir, who knows Rama himself." "Then how do you worship him?" Full stop. Either he goes away puzzled or he goes away thinking you are a *nastik* [atheist], or he says, "This is a damn fool. I have wasted my time with him." This is the same story with Krishna, with Durga, with Lakshmi, with Mahishasuri, with everybody.

Who is here who has worshipped a god he has known? Therefore, to make it possible to worship in the true sense, this principle manifests itself as a guru. It says, let me provide them with an object which they can love, on which they can meditate, and to which they can aspire to become. So such a principle, when it is embodied, creates what you can call at best a divine person, not God. When Babuji was asked by Dr.Varadachari, "Are you or are you not God, Master?" He just, "hu, hu, hu, hu"... went like that. He did not reply. Kasturi was sitting next to Babuji. "Sister, is he or he is not God?" She said, "You ask him." So he said, "I have asked him but he doesn't give an answer." She said, "That is the answer." Because Babuji has said [that] even God cannot know he is God. Because the moment He knows He is God, the rest of creation comes into being. He is God, there is 'no God'. He is Ultimate, there is non-Ultimate. There is the Absolute, there is non-Absolute. There is the Ultimate. There is the Zero. There is good and there is evil. The opposites come into existence.

So, if ever you meet God and if you ask Him this question, He will be totally at a loss to answer you. He will say, "Well, let us both go and ask God." Now if you have believed He is God, you will say, "What is this? I have fallen into the clutches of a charlatan. I thought He was God and now He is asking me to go with Him to look for God somewhere else." So, even God seeks God. It is my opinion, after a long span of thirty years, that to know Himself, God creates us as mirrors in which He can see Himself. Babuji Maharaj said, "I am a mirror. You see in me what you are yourself." Perhaps He waits for that perfect person who will one day mirror him and say this is Babuji, or in his own words, "Ram Chandra, *ye aap hain!*" [This is you]. He can tell himself. This is what we are all looking for.

We are looking, you know, the first question when a baby is born: who does it look like? First quarrel begins. With the first baby in the family the first quarrel between the husband and wife begins. The honeymoon is over. "No, no, my mother says it look like me," says the wife. "Don't be silly. Look at his nose! It is my nose all over." Why do we want our children to look like us, behave like us, walk like us, talk like us, become like us? Because that is the beauty of creation – that one who is God does not want to create a monster as His offspring. Would you be happy if your child is born as a monster – six legs, two heads, seventeen tongues? Imagine a woman having as a child, Durga, like that – I mean she would run screaming out of the hospital!

So God wants his creation to be like Himself. He says, "This is my creation. These are my children. I am looking for one who is like me", and He is looking and looking and looking and looking. His search for Himself in us is far more tragic than our search for Him. Because I believe that we look in our lifetime – some of us find Him, we are happy. How often has He been successful over these aeons of time since the beginning of creation? How often has he been able to smile and say, "Yes, here is one more"? Or at least, "Here is one"? – only He can say.

So when we, as Babuji said, we hide ourselves to expose Him – or should we expose ourselves and hide Him? This is the fundamental question of spirituality. All arrogance, pride, self, selfhood, is an exhibition of ourselves hiding that which is within. Now *my* qualities manifest. When we submerge into Him and there is nothing of me that is present, then He manifests.

Therefore, spirituality speaks of the need to overcome all tendencies. Not what Krishna said, "*Sarva paapebhyo mokshayishyaami*"– *sarva paapebhyo* and *sarva punyebhyo* [all virtues] also, because *punya* [virtue] is a greater vice than *paapa* [sin] in my opinion. At least when we sin we are ashamed. We go to God like a dog crawling before Him – but we *do* go to God. In our virtues we are arrogant, we are prideful. We pretend to be gods.

I think the first sin begins with the thought that, "I have not sinned." If you have not sinned, how do you know what sin is? A child does not know what is a lie. It speaks. We teach it to tell lies. Telephone – "Tell the man, *papa* [father] is not at home." Second time the telephone calls –

"Tell him that I am in a meeting." Third time the phone calls – "Tell him that he has gone out." Children learn to lie.

So, the knowledge of sin, of lies, this is taught to children by the adult society. The children are absolutely innocent. That is why it is called innocence. Innocence means a state where there is no knowledge of either virtue or sin. To be just sinless is not virtuous. Any fool can be sinless. What is that state which is true innocence, where you are not aware of whether it is sinful or virtuous? Because you don't know the two things: what is virtue – I don't know; what is sin – also I don't know. I do what is necessary.

Therefore in Sahaj Marg there is no sin; there is no virtue, there is no vice. It is a system which, in its very approach, transcends the opposites, which Lord Krishna in the Gita holds out as a big achievement. *Sukhadukhe same krutvaa laabhaa laabhau jayaa jayau* [Treat pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat equally], he says. But he who does not know what is comfort or what is discomfort, he is the true person. Babuji said, "He is who is happy under all circumstances...." In this word 'all circumstances', he avoided the use of opposite concepts. He did not say, "He who can sleep on a stone or on a mattress...." He said, "He who is happy under *all* circumstances is the really happy person."

So we have to very much modify our ideas of worship. What is worship? Is it just the recitation of *namavali* {list of names}? Is it a praise of God, which is flattery? Why are we flattering Him? Because we want Him to do some good to us. Therefore Babuji said, "Prayer is begging, meditation is waiting." For what? For what He will bestow on us. Not give, but bestow upon us as a condition of my existence.

Therefore in Sahaj Marg there is no God blessing us. There is no Master giving us the goodies of life. But there is a Master who bestows upon us, as the medium of Divinity Itself, condition after condition, which elevates us from the merely mundane to the absolute spiritual condition. This is the aim of Sahaj Marg sadhana; this is the practice of Sahaj Marg sadhana, that we don't ask for anything except like a child growing, we grow. And how do we grow? Again, as a child grows we also grow naturally. Therefore it is 'Sahaj' Marg.

So those of you, again I repeat, who have been or trying to be orthodox, please re-judge your orthodoxy. Rethink over your ideas of God. Go back into your worship and see why you have been worshipping. Is it a laudable purpose? Has it been free of the chains of self-seeking? Because, if you have gone to God asking Him to give something, you are nothing more than a beggar.

So these are some of the thoughts, I think, our brother's small talk with me released today. I hope he and others have got some idea of what Sahaj Marg is about. Sahaj Marg is not a place where we get something. Getting or not getting is a result of our samskaras. Many people have asked me, "Why do people go to Babuji and yet get cancer?" Because it is a samskara. His business is to see that before we die, we achieve the highest condition that we can possibly achieve. His service is dedicated only to that purpose.

Incidentally, as he told me once, he said, "If your samskara is going to interfere with your spiritual evolution, then I shall modify that samskara or remove it – not otherwise." Please remember that. Avoid the temptation to ask silly questions. "Why is this man such a devotee and still a clerk? Even his promotion has been withheld." Why not? "Why is this man a millionaire and becoming more and more a millionaire?" Why not? It is necessary for his evolution to be a millionaire – as it is for this person to be a pauper to evolve. It is necessary for one to be sick to evolve, as it is for another one to be healthy to evolve. Who are you to judge? Especially few can judge about himself or herself, and say, "This I need for my evolution." He knows best.

Therefore, it would be wise of every abhyasi to accept a given life situation, life circumstances, as the necessary circumstances and situations for your evolution. When you accept it, things will change; as you change, your circumstances will change.

Thank you.

14

God Helps Those Who Make an Effort

Every time I go to the western countries and come back, there is one big difference I see. Difference means, difference in outlook, difference in attitudes, everything. In the West they believe that man, that is, the human being does everything himself, no need for God. Here we believe that God does everything, no need for us to do anything. So we sit at ease, whether we are the rickshaw-puller under the tree, saying, "Whatever is there in my destiny, I will get. If I am to get five rupees, somebody will come and call me. I don't have to go and look for business." So he lies under the Peepal tree and waits for a *grahak*, for a customer. Somebody comes – one day, three rupees; one day, five

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26 October 1992, Babuji Memorial Ashram, Chennai, India

rupees. He says, "Whatever was in my destiny today, I have got." "Why didn't you work more?" He says, "Do you question destiny? If I was to have got some more, I would have got something more. Since I did not get something more, it means that my destiny was not to get something more."

In the West they say, "What God? Where is God? I alone am everything!" Really speaking, this business of *aham brahmasmi* [I am Brahman] is more appropriate in the West, because there they think that man is God. Here we think, God is man – *deivam manushya rupena.* So, we are both at fault. But often I think that if I have to choose between the two mistakes, I would choose the western mistake. At least they achieve something. We achieve nothing. At least they have perfected technology, they have beautiful science, they have a high standard of living. At least in the physical life they are comfortable, they have something to show, there is development. Here we are going from poverty to poverty, degradation to degradation, nothing to show either for man's presence or God's presence. There they have something to show at least for man's presence, if not God's presence. Given a choice, I would go to the West.

Babuji also said that he would not like to return from Europe. Every time we were leaving Denmark or wherever it was, he said, "*Jee chahata hai ki hum yahi ruk jaye.*" This is not an exaggeration, it is an exact quotation. "My heart desires that I may remain here" – that is what he was saying all the time. And he was not after comforts, in the sense that he wanted luxuries or air-conditioning, but he found there an approach which we lack totally. Here we talk, there they do. Even our scientists – I have not found – perhaps only a few, whom I can really respect. They all have degrees, they all do some research work, they all have some grants. Many of them go abroad, read some papers somewhere and come back. What they have achieved, I have no idea because I don't see their contribution here, in our country. What is the use of watering a plant in Europe and leaving my garden empty?

So you see, we have to accept the western approach and do something ourselves and wait for God later. Because without perfecting ourselves as something which can work, something which can aspire for, something which can do and something which can achieve something, we are useless even as instruments. If it is true that God works through human agencies, then we must become at least a perfect instrument, if not a perfect human being. So you see, in this country, you see all the paintings, the photographs, the beautiful books about India costing 1200 rupees. Everywhere you find lazy people: a sannyasi sitting in his yellow robes under a tree, meditating, a beggar in the street, a fellow with the monkey, another man pulling a bear along, groups of idle people sitting everywhere, some with chillum, some with pots of tea, some with the *kulhad* [earthen teacup], everywhere people without work. These books are sold for 1200 rupees – beautifully produced, glossy paper, wonderful photographs, all testifying to the laziness of the Indian. Man and woman, it's the same. Of the two, the woman is better. They are compelled to work, especially in places like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh; it is the woman who does most of the work. Even they pull carts. Shameless males, they are sitting smoking their chillums. But they think they are proud: "In our country males don't work." So, what do they do? They talk of Ranjit Singh, Bahadur Singh, Talwars, etc. Instead of idle people under trees, men with armour, swords drawn in their hands pretending to be brave – either we are lazy or we are pretending to be active; there is no activity in this country.

Most of all, when you come to religion and spirituality, idleness is praised: "We don't have to do anything, sir, it's all His grace." "Why don't you meditate?" "Even for meditation, Master must give me the capacity." "Do you love the Master?" "For even that, sir, he has to create that capacity in me to love him." So you see, our success rate is enormously low because of our attitude to life. Vivekananda (I think) said, "Let us seek God later. Let us start with tilling the soil; growing something on all this fallow land that we have, millions of hectares in this country." "Waiting for rain." "Why do you wait for rain? Dig wells." We only get what we work for. When we work for something, we at least get something.

If ever the West or the western people become wise enough to accept the fact of God and become devoted and link his enormous power to their effort, nothing can stop them. Ours is like a motor car – no engine. Like our children, we are also happy to sit in old cars and pretend it is going to Kashi, Haridwar. Those who cannot go to Haridwar, they fall at the feet of people who have gone to Haridwar because to have their darshan is as good as having gone to Haridwar yourself. Those who cannot even do that, [they] buy bottles of *Ganga jal* [water of the river

Ganges], one rupee each, and pretend they have had *Ganga snaan* [a bath in the river Ganges]. People who cannot even do that, they say, "When Ganga is flowing through my country, what have I to wonder about, what have I to work for?" *Jis desh mein Ganga behati hai.* [The land where the river Ganges flows.] So you see, how foolish we have become, how stupid we have become, how lazy we have become, how our religion seems to have been created for lazy people to make them even lazier. "I don't do anything; He does."

Yesterday I heard one talk here that somebody gave, praising this Rama *mandir* [temple] business. Who amongst us here is going to live, for how long? And what is the use of building a temple, where others will worship but you will only be proud that you have constructed the temple, victorious? They believe Rama will come again, bless them, and give them *Rama Rajya* [the nation's rule similar to that which took place during Lord Rama's period]. But Rama was not successful himself. People should read the Ramayana carefully. Because, if your Itihasa is to be believed, he went into the river Sarayu and disappeared. So on what foundation is our faith built? On failure._

So, why did he fail? Perhaps, wrong objectives: "*Pitru vaakya paripalanam*" – listening to the father and his order. Babuji Maharaj has said, "Obey only if four things permit it. Your religion must permit, your Shastra [scriptures] must permit, your guru must permit it and your conscience must permit it. Suppose somebody's father says, "Go and kill this man, he is my enemy." My religion does not permit it, my Shastra does not permit it, my guru does not permit it, and my conscience does not permit it. How can I kill that man just because my father said it? But the Ramayana says, "*Pitru vaakya paripaalanam*." And the life of Rama is supposed to be the greatest example of "*Pitru vaakya paripaalanam*."

What about the Mahabharata? Similar. Again and again there is this idea that if Bhishma had not stood by his wonderful *pratijnas* [vows], things would have not happened according to the way they happened.

There is a story that when Lord Krishna was going back to Dwaraka after everything was over, the Kauravas had been decimated, the Pandavas had left, he met Uddhava or somebody on the way, and Uddhava says, "With your presence, my Lord, how could this war happen? There must be some cause for it." Krishna says, "Of course, there was a cause." "Was it the Kauravas?" Krishna smiles. "Was it so and so?" He smiles again. "Was it so and so? He smiles again, no answer. Finally Uddhava says, "Why don't you tell me? I want to know." He says, "Dharmaputra [Yudhishthira] was the cause of this war." (I don't know how many of you know the story.) He [Uddhava] says, "Why? I am stunned! I cannot understand, Lord, how you can say this. Dharmaputra? How can he be responsible for this?" Krishna says that, "When that gambling was to begin, Duryodhana very quietly says, "My uncle [Shakuni] will throw the dice." He [Duryodhana] did not believe in himself. He was not so arrogant or egoistic. He surrendered to his uncle." So Uddhava says, "What was the fault in Dharmaputra? Did he not throw it himself?" He [Krishna] says, "Yes, that was the fault. He was arrogant. He thought he could win against Shakuni. Has anybody existed who could win [in a game of dice] against Shakuni? Wasn't he stupid? Wasn't he arrogant? Wasn't he proud? He could have said, "If Shakuni is going to throw for you, Krishna will throw for me." They could not have objected. It would have worked for him."

Therefore the cause of the Mahabharat, the war which is supposed to have killed ninety crore people, was Dharmaputra. And we praise him, we extol him, and we talk about his saving a dog which followed him to heaven, and that he would not go to heaven without his dog but he would go to heaven without his brothers, without his wife, all of whom he was willing to sacrifice in the name of dharma.

The story that I am trying to create out of these great epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, is that we have sacrificed too much in the false name of dharma. Karma has been forgotten. Karma has worked, even for liberation, even for achieving the highest. Dharma can do nothing without the foundation of karma. If the Lord is dharma, man is karma. Without the combination of the two, there is no heaven, there is no hell, there is no earth, there is nothing.

God helps those who help themselves. He doesn't do, He helps. If I want to do something, His help comes. If I don't do anything, He cannot help it. It is like electricity, it can run the fans, it can light our bulbs, it can run enormous engines, but by itself, electricity itself is destructive power. We make it constructive, useful, a power that can be applied to increase our well-being, to serve our purposes. Electricity in the form of lightning can destroy a whole population. What is the use of electricity, if I cannot use it? What is the use of wind, if I cannot use it? What is the use of these elements *(pancha bhuta)*, if I cannot use it? The story is, the wisdom is that, if I can harness these powers to my use, I can achieve anything I want.

So God says, "You do; I will achieve for you." It is not that He achieves for Himself. He says, "Even if you want to come to me, you have to take the first step, I will take the second step." What does it mean? Without my taking a step, He cannot even take a step. It is as if I am before a mirror, where anything I do, the reflection in the mirror does. I move my hand, the hand in the mirror moves. I wink, the image in the mirror winks. I laugh, it laughs. I weep, it weeps. I progress, it progresses. It is a moot question whether 'when I grow, God grows', because God doesn't grow. Does it mean I do not grow? Perhaps not. Then what is this illusion about the slavery and our being locked up in a hell of our own creation? It is precisely this ignorance that as long as I am waiting for someone to come and unlock this jail, I will remain there.

Babuji Maharaj said [Sahaj Marg] is a practical approach, practical way – 'practical' means 'to be practised'. Does bhakti have a place in it? Of course, because That which is my goal, evokes my bhakti, my admiration, my love for it, my adoration for it – it is automatic. If it is a true goal, I must be able to adore that goal.

It is not that everything adorable can be a goal. But the goal *must* be adorable, the goal must be worshipable, the goal must be beautiful, the goal must be resplendent. It must shine. So, Sahaj Marg is a severely practical thing. There is no place in this system to say that Master did this, Master did that, he got me a bus-ticket, he delayed the bus for my sake. This is too crazy! I am very annoyed when I hear speeches like this.

Once, one man asked me, "Does it mean that you doubt the Master's capacity?" It is not like that, not at all. But Babuji said, "Don't use a crane to pick up a needle from the floor." And I can't imagine the crane coming by itself to pick up a needle from the floor. I have to use the crane. The divine power is at the total disposal of the one who is willing to use it. But we cannot be blasphemous and use that power to pick up a needle, which I can stoop and pick up myself. That would be another example of our laziness that I am too lazy to stoop and pick up the needle: "God, you pick it up for me." If we had true self-respect, if you had real respect for God, you would never invoke His capacity or His power for anything which you could do for yourself. I would consider it demeaning, lacking self-respect, to do something which I can do and instead of I doing it, I go and ask for Master's power. "Please, Master, help me to eat my food." Have you said it? "Please, Master, there is this lovely *jalebi* [sweet] in front of me, help me to eat it." Are we saying it?

So, please forsake this idea that God's power is working all the time – it is not. Electricity works when we switch it on, when the connection is given. God's power will work when we switch it on, when the connection is given. That is precisely what we do in our sittings – give the connection. *You* switch it on every time you meditate. And when that meditation becomes something continuous, a state of contemplation in which we are permanently immersed, when we remember him all the time, the switch is on permanently, then his power works through us continuously. But, not to pick up needles and not to eat *masala dosa* – that is still very much our business. There is always a part we have to play, and there is always a part which He has to play. The two have to be linked. Therefore we find saints falling sick, saints not having enough food to eat, saints having to walk to Badrinath, and we say, "Why such a great saint has to suffer so much?" Because He is playing His part, he is playing his part. And at that stage the saint says, "God suffers through me." Because if He is in me, He has to suffer everything I suffer, enjoy everything I enjoy. But for some reason of his own, He makes me suffer so that He may suffer. Perhaps because He cannot either enjoy or suffer by Himself.

I have often wondered whether the human being is not a creation of God through whom He tests His own creation, like we use our tongue to test the food. The tongue has no taste, but it is an instrument which helps *me* as a totality to taste my food. The tongue does not enjoy it, *I* enjoy it. Softness – the skin does not enjoy the softness, *I* enjoy the softness or the hardness or the roughness. If it is bitter, it is bitter to *me*, not to *my* tongue.

So if 'I', as my soul sitting inside me, can use this body to experience this universe in all its manifest glory, in all its manifest degradation, in all its manifest multifaceted aspects, should not He, who is inside my soul, activating my soul, making it move, making it live, have the same experience through the soul which is experiencing through the body? Like my eye sees through my spectacles, I see through my eye, through my spectacles. He sees through me, through my eye, through my spectacles. If it were not for me, He could not see this world. He has created it like a blind man having a child, and then having to feel the child and to see what it is like. Only one sense works – feeling. When the child begins to speak, another sense works, but He can never see.

So God wants perfection in us, balance in us, all the faculties balanced, so that He is not deceived by one sense, making the other senses subordinate, which happens in the case of an artist – only his visual perceptions are fine, everything else is crude Or as it happens in the case of a musician, only his auditory perception is perfect, everything else is crude. Therefore you find drunken musicians, immoral musicians, crude musicians. Therefore God prefers one with a balanced life – everything in its place, everything in balance, everything giving the right sensory inputs to create a beautifully blended, balanced picture of this universe. Through such a person God sees his creation and says, "It is *you* who are my creation."

So let's get out of this Indian habit of praising Rama, praising Shatrughna [Lakshmana's twin], praising Dharmaputra. Because the Itihasa and Puranas that have brought us to the ruinous condition, in which our India is today, could not have been great. Successive generations of human beings in India have become, succeedingly, more and more degraded and more and more corrupt, more and more blasphemous, more and more futile in their approach, beggarly. Let's wake up and say, "If I do not do, He can do nothing."

Thank you.

Glossary

Note that the phonetic spelling of each Sanskrit word has been given within parentheses after the word.

Adi Varaha Kshetra (aadi varaaha kshetra): The holy place where a temple is dedicated to the Varaha avatar.

advaita: State of unity (non-duality).

Aham: I.

Aham Brahmasmi (aham brahmaasmi): I am Brahman.

akasha marga (aakaasha maarga): The aerial route/ path

amrita: Nectar that partaken of bestows immortality.

amrita manthana: Churning of the ocean for the nectar that bestows immortality.

amsha: Part of.

apsaras: Celestial nymphs.

arambha kshetra (aarambha kshetra): Primary field.

asana (aasana): Posture; third limb of Patanjali's yoga.

asat: Unreal, non-existence.

asura: Demon.

avadhuta: Generally revered as elevated souls, but are really persons with spiritual aspirations who have become 'fixed' at a certain level because their development has been arrested.

avatara (avataara): Incarnation of a Divine soul.

bhakta: Devotee.

Bharata (Bhaarata): An ancient king in whose name the country India is called Bharata.

Bhishma (Bheeshma): The grand-uncle of the Pandavas and Kauravas in the Mahabharata.

bhoga jivana (bhoga jeevana): Life of enjoyment.

bhuloka (bhooloka): Earth.

Brahma (Brahmaa): One of the Trinity of gods in Hinduism, i.e. Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma.

Brahmin: One of the four major castes of India. The priest caste. The others are: Kshatriya (warrior), Vaisya (merchant), and Sudra (worker).

Dattatreya (Dattaatreya): Name of a revered personality considered as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

devalayam (devaalayam): Temple.

Dharmaputra: *see* Yudhishthira.

dhyana (dhyaana): Meditation; seventh limb of Patanjali's yoga.

divya sparsha: Divine touch.

Duryodhana: Eldest of the Kaurava brothers in the epic Mahabharata.

dvijanma: "Twice born"; the second birth being after initiation by the Guru.
dwarapalas (dwaarapaalaas): Doorkeepers; gatekeepers.

Ekam Sat: One Reality. (This is part of the Rig Vedic statement which says, Reality is one, but the learned perceive It as many.)

fakir (fakeer): In Islamic tradition, a saint. One who has renounced the world, like the sannyasi of the Hindu tradition.

Gita (Geetaa): The Bhagavad Gita, or Song of God. Divine knowledge given to Arjuna by Lord Krishna in the Mahabharata.
gotra: Lineage.

Hanuman (Hanumaan): Lord Rama's faithful servant in the epic Ramayana.
Hindustan (Hindustaan): Another name for India.
hridaya yoni: Heart as the source or the field.

Itihasa (itihaasa): In India, the Ramayana of Valmiki and the Mahabharata of Vyasa are considered as Itihasas.

jnanendriya (jnaanendriya): Five senses pertaining to perception, knowledge or wisdom.

jyotish: Astrologer.

Kaliyuga: The present aeon, the first three being Krita, Tretaa and Dvaapara.

karma bhumi (karma bhoomi): Field of action.

karmendriya: Organs or senses of action.

karma phala: The fruit of action.

Karna: A great warrior who fought in the side of Kauravas against the Pandavas in the Mahabharata war. Also known as Suryaputra. [*see* Suryaputra]

kathakalakshepam (kathaakaalakshepam): Religious discourse.

koupinam (koupeenam): Loincloth; a single piece of cloth tied round the hips.

Krishna Lila (Krishna Leelaa): Lord Krishna's divine play.

Kshatriya: One of the four major castes of India. The warrior caste. The others are: Brahmin (priest), Vaisya (merchant), and Sudra (worker).

kshobh or kshobha: Jerk or vibration. State of disturbance; loss of equilibrium; stir caused by the will of God to effect creation.

Kubera: God of wealth according to Hindu mythology.

Kurma: The second incarnation of Lord Vishnu – the tortoise.

Lakshmana: Lord Rama's devoted brother in the epic, Ramayana.

laya: Mergence or dissolution.

layavastha or laya avasthaa: The state of merging.

lila (leelaa): Divine play.

Lord Venkateshwara: Name of the deity in the Tirupathi temple, also known as Balaji.

Mahabharat/a (Mahaabhaarat/a): Great epic of Indian culture and world literature.

mahapralaya (mahaapralaya): State of complete dissolution, when everything in existence merges with the Centre. The complete dissolution of the whole universe.

maharishi (mahaarishi): Great sage.

mandir: Temple.

marga (maarga): Way or path.

Matsya: The first incarnation of Lord Vishnu – the fish.

maya (maayaa): Phenomenal appearance. It is really a power of God. All manifestation or expansion that seems illusory is the play of maya. Illusion.

Meru: Name of the mountain forming the northern border of India, where the gods are supposed to reside. According to the scriptures, it was used as a rod to churn the ocean.

mleccha: Outcaste.

muladhara (moolaadhaara): One of the six chakras or plexuses, symbolically denoted as lotuses, situated in the subtle body. It is the root chakra, at the perineum or central support.

muni: Saint; seer; one who has realised Self.

namavali (naamaavali): List of names.

Narasimha: The fourth incarnation of Lord Vishnu – man-lion

Nasadiya Sukta (naasadeeya sookta): A small portion in the Rig Veda describing the mystery of creation.

nastik (naastika): Atheist.

Navratri (Navaraatri): A Hindu religious festival of nine nights during which the Goddess Durga is worshipped.

niyama: Subjected laws which must be followed. They are purity, contentment, austerity, self study, self abandonment (devotion to God). Second limb of Patanjali's Ashtanga yoga.

paapa: Sin.

pancha bhuta: The five elements or principles in Hindu cosmology: earth, water, fire, air and space.

panchendriya: Five senses.

Parabrahma: Ultimate or Supreme God, God in His transcendent form.

parnashala (parnashaalaa): Hermitage; literally a hut made of leaves.

Parvati (Paarvati): The divine consort of Lord Shiva; derived from the term *parvat,* which means 'mountain', it is the name of the daughter of the lord of the mountain Himalayas, and hence she is known as Parvati.

pitru: Departed ancestors.

pranahuti (praanaahuti): Process of yogic transmission; derived from meaning 'life' and *aahuti* meaning 'offering'. Offering of the life-force by the guru into the disciple's heart.

pranayama (praanaayaama): Derived from *prana* (life, vital force) and from ayama (to restrain). The regulation of prana. Hatha Yoga breathing technique. Fourth step in Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga.

pratibimba: Reflection.

pratijna (pratigyaa): Vow.

punarjanma: Rebirth.

punya: Righteous or meritorious action.

Puranas (Puraanas): Epics or mythology.

purusha: Man; male. Also the Self.

purushottama: Perfect human being. Also the Highest Self.

Raja Janak: Father of Sita [*see* Sita.]; a great king known for his spiritual wisdom.

Rajput: The warrior caste of Rajasthan.

rakshasa (raakshasa): Demon.

Rama (Raama): Husband of Sita in the Indian epic story Ramayana.

Rama Rajya (Raama Raajya): The nation's rule similar to that which took place during Lord Rama's period.

Ramayan/a (Raamaayan/a): One of the epic stories of India.

ratha: Chariot.
richa: Cosmic recording of all thoughts and events.
rishi: Seer; saint; sage.

sadhak or sadhaka (saadhaka): Practicant; disciple who practises a sadhana.
sadhana (saadhana): Spiritual practice.
sagara (saagara): Ocean.
sahasrara chakra (sahasraara chakra): Lotus of a thousand petals located in the frontal lobe of the brain.
salaam: Salute.
samadhi (samaadhi): Original balance. State in which we stay attached to Reality. In Sahaj Marg, the return to the original condition which reigned in the beginning. The eighth limb of Patanjali's Yoga.
samsara sagara (samsaara saagara): Ocean of life.
samskaras (samskaaras): Impressions; grossness.
samskriti: Culture.
Sanatana Dharma (Sanaatana Dharma): Popularly known as Hinduism. Literally, the eternal dharma, or dharma which has no beginning.
Sandhyavandana (Sandhyaavandana): Daily ritual which has to be performed by the 'twice- born' in the Hindu religion.
sannyasi (sannyaasi): One who has renounced the world and leads a solitary life of celibacy and asceticism.

sanstha (sansthaa): Spiritual tradition; organisation; group.

Sat: Truth, reality, existence; the ultimate principle, or infinity.

Sat-Chit-Anandam (sat-chit-aanandam): Existence-consciousness-bliss.

sauda (saudaa): Barter; deal; bargain.

shahenshah (shahenshaah): Emperor.

shaitan (shaitaan): Satan; devil.

shakti: Power, energy, strength

shariram (shareeram): Body.

shikhar: Crown, top, summit.

Shiva: One of the Trinity in Hinduism, the others being Brahma and Vishnu.

siddhi: Capacity to do miracles; supernatural power.

simhasana (simhaasana): Throne.

Sita (Seetaa): Wife of Lord Rama in the epic Ramayana.

srishti: Era of creation in the Indian calendar.

Suryaputra: son of the sun god. [*see* Karna.]

svadhishthana chakra (svaadhishthaana chakra): One of the six chakras or plexuses, symbolically denoted as lotuses, situated in the subtle body. It is situated near the navel region.

swami or swamiji: Hindu priest. Saint.

taali (taalee): Sacred thread worn around the neck by married women.

tadap: Yearning; craving.

tapasya: Ascetic practices to purify the soul and attract divine grace. Literally means 'heat', and indicates the heat generated by the friction of intense spiritual practice.

trimurti (trimoorti): Trinity of gods in Hinduism – Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

tyaga (tyaaga): Renunciation; sacrifice.

uddhaar: Development.

Vaishnav(a): Follower or devotee of Lord Vishnu.

vanavasa (vanavaasa): exile; to dwell in the forest.

Varaha (Varaaha): The third incarnation of Lord Vishnu – the boar.

Vasuki (Vaasuki): The great snake used as a rope for churning the ocean.

vibhinn(a): Various.

Vishnu: The preserver; one of the Hindu Trinity, the others being Brahma and Shiva.

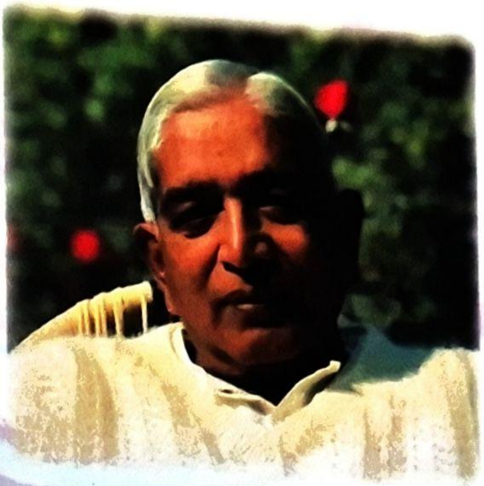
Yama: 1. Self-interdiction. Vow of abstinence of violence, falsity, robbery, unchastity, and tendency to acquire. 2. Lord of Death.

yoga: A system of Hindu philosophy showing means of emancipation of the soul from further migration, mainly subdivided as Raja Yoga and Hatha Yoga.

Yudhishthira: The eldest of the five Pandava princes in the Mahabharata.

yuga: Aeon.

Yugapurusha: The Lord of this aeon.



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